Restoring faith in the 'Republican Brand' Mike Fredenburg 8

CALIFORNIA ★ POLITICAL
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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2008 • VOLUME 19 • NUMBER 6 • $4.95

'Watchdog' media builds an altar to The Lightworker 4
George Neumayr

The new anti-Second Amendment Congress 5
Sam Paredes

High Court finally reigns in ESA 6
M. David Stirling

Happy Christmas
to all, and to all a good night.

ristmas essay: St. Benedict 10
Whittaker Chambers

Which Party is out of step with voters? 15
Gregory Sanford

other mysterious charity puzzle 19
Si Frumkin

e Decade of the Great Liberal Death Wish 21
Malcolm Muggeridge

What really led to the Crusades? 28
Part 4: Pilgrims assailed; first calls for a crusade
John Henry Newman

Four movies to watch on DVD 34
Eldon Quick

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An Opening for Common Sense

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REVIEW
Where some animals are more equal: M. David Stirling's exposé of a once-idealistic movement's capture
GREEN GONE WILD
Elevating Nature Above Human Rights
Savvy politico
California's shrewd governor betrays his Party and his election campaign centerpiece – a solemn pledge of no tax hikes – to join the Bustamante sub-minority
The Schwarzenegger No Tax Hikes Mandate
The Bustamante Please Raise Our Taxes Mandate
The Palin Factor
How Alaska's governor transformed the McCain campaign and rejuvenated American politics.
by John Kurzweil

"The beginning of political wisdom is the recognition that liberalism is at the end of its intellectual tether."
— Irving Kristol

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REVIEW

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2008 • VOLUME 19 • NUMBER 6

FEATURES

CHRISTMAS ESSAY: St. Benedict By Whittaker Chambers 10
A colossal figure on a scale of importance in shaping the civilization of the West. Yet, today, he, and many like him, are largely unknown.

***Which* Party is out of step with voters?** By Gregory Sanford 15
Americans — including Californians — still reject bedrock liberalism. To win, the GOP must only free itself from 'moderate' leadership unworthy of its conservative principles.

Another mysterious charity puzzle By Si Frumkin 19
Surprise! It turns out that liberals are stingy and conservatives generous in private charitable giving.

The Decade of the Great Liberal Death Wish By Malcolm Muggeridge 21
With a solid phalanx of communists about to enter the White House, *CPR* reprints Mr. Muggeridge's still best primer on the meaning of leftism.

DEPARTMENTS

Correspondence 2

Sacramento Spectator 3

The Working Press By George Neumayr 4
'Watchdog' media builds an altar to The Lightworker of Liberalism.

Facts on Gun Control By Sam Paredes 5
All About ... the New Congress: Fasten your seatbelts, it's going to be a bumpy ride!

Those in power over us By M. David Stirling 6
Finally some good news: High Court rules that 'species preservation' does not trump national security.

A Closer Look By Michael S. Fredenburg 8
Restoring faith in the 'Republican Brand'

ARTS & CULTURE

History By John Henry Newman 28
What *really* led to the Crusades? Part 4
Few topics bear so much misinformation. Newman gives context.
This issue: **Pilgrims assailed; first calls for a crusade.**

Film By Eldon Quick 34
A 'new' classic western; Ford *vs.* the little guy; goring lefty's sacred cows

First Things By John Kurzweil 36
Conservatives must pay more attention to the war over words.

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California Political Review (ISSN 1075-3079) is published bimonthly by the California Public Policy Foundation. Send address changes, manuscripts, and Correspondence to: Editor, *California Political Review*, Post Office Box 931, Camarillo, CA 93011-0931; or calprev@cppf.us. Correspondence may be condensed due to space limitations. Unsolicited manuscripts should be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Signed articles express their authors' opinions and do not necessarily reflect the views of the California Public Policy Foundation which does not endorse or oppose candidates or intervene in any candidate election campaign. Unsigned editorials express the editors' opinions and not necessarily the views of the California Public Policy Foundation. Rates: $24.95 yearly (six issues). Outside U.S. add $6/year surface, $20 for airmail. *California Political Review* is copyright © 2008 by the California Public Policy Foundation.

California Political Review (ISSN 1075-3079) is published bimonthly for $24.95 per year by the California Public Policy Foundation, 24005 Ventura Blvd., Calabasas, CA 91302-1447. Periodical Postage Paid at Calabasas, CA, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *California Political Review*, P.O. Box 931, Camarillo, CA 93011-0931.

CORRESPONDENCE

Zeal for the suffering masses

CPR Editor John Kurzweil's "The Palin Factor" (*CPR*, Sept./Oct. 2008) quotes English writer/one-time radical George Gissing talking about his left-wing youth as "zeal on behalf of the suffering masses [that, in fact] was nothing more nor less than disguised zeal on behalf of my own starved passions." Mr. Gissing may have spent his young years sorely in need of growing up enough to assume an adult's commitment to worthwhile political action, but that hardly proves that everyone on the left similarly lacks a mature, honest basis for supporting the policies and candidates they work to enact and elect. Mr. Kurzweil's blasé dismissal of all liberals on the thin proof of Gissing's words about himself alone is unjustified. He variously describes Democrat ideas as "dishonest," "cynical," and characterized by "a specific mode of moral criticism, one designed not to encourage people to reform their ways and do good, but to convince them that all such encouragement is hypocritical posturing." Talk about cynical! *Ad hominem* attacks on one's opponents' motives are a poor substitute for thoughtful proofs that their *positions* are wrong.

James R. Ferguson
Santa Barbara

Mr. Kurzweil responds:

I raised the points Mr. Ferguson addresses not to attack left-wingers' motives but to to explain why they support policies that not only never work as advertised, but always aggravate the very "problems" they are said to be designed to solve. The tough part of leftism — for anyone trying to judge it on face value — is to explain why no amount of failure convinces the left to alter its approach to problem solving the least bit. Why, that is, do they never learn? It is almost as if they do not *want* their programs to succeed. Very puzzling, but Mr. Gissing, looking at his own typically futile radicalism provided a more plausible answer than that intelligent, "mature" people really expect socialist economics and libertine social policy, given just one more try, to yield results different from those all history shows they always produce.

"I was poor and ignorant;" Gissing wrote, *"I did not make their [the suffering masses'] cause my own, but my own cause theirs."* That is, he was too self-absorbed to worry about the effects liberal policies actually have on people; in effect, he did not care whether they improve anything or not. The point was to lash out at his own pain; no more than that. This is just what we see whenever the left manages to gain enough power to enact its ideas.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION, 10/22/08

Title: California Political Review (ISSN 1075-3079). Frequency: Bi-monthly. Six issues annually. Subscription price: $24.95. Location of publication office: 24005 Ventura Blvd., Calabasas, Los Angeles County, CA 91302-1447. Contact: John Kurzweil, 805/445-9483. Publisher's Mailing Address: PO Box 931, Camarillo, CA 93011-0931. Publisher: The California Public Policy Foundation, PO Box 931, Camarillo, CA 93011-0931. Editor: John Kurzweil, PO Box 931, Camarillo, CA 93011-0931. Managing Editor: John Kurzweil, PO Box 931, Camarillo, CA 93011-0931. Owner: The California Public Policy Foundation, PO Box 931, Camarillo, CA 93011-0931. Publication name: California Political Review. Issue date for circulation data below: Sept/Oct 2008.

Extent and nature of circulation	Avg. copies each issue preceeding 12 months	Actual copies of single issue pub. nearest to filing date
A. Total no. copies printed	2283	2900
B1. Out-of-County paid circulation periodicals mail	985	917
B2. In County paid circulation, mail	134	154
B3. Paid circulation, non-USPS distribution	336	1006
B4. Other paid, mail circulation	0	0
C. Total paid circulation	1455	2077
D1. Out-of-County free distribution periodicals mail	306	304
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D3. Other free distribution by mail	0	0
E. Free distribution, not mail	27	50
F. Total free distribution	371	400
G. Total distribution	1826	2477
H. Copies not distributed	457	423
I. Total	2283	2900
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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete. John Kurzweil, Editor

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SACRAMENTO SPECTATOR

Dorothy Parker's famous remark that "there's no 'there' there" about Oakland also well describes Arnold Schwarzenegger's Republican principles.

Your *Spectator* has been critical of the governor in the past, but honestly has tried to be fair. Counting the '06 primary, I voted for Arnold all three times he's been on the ballot. But now, I wouldn't vote for him again under any circumstances. If he opposes Senator Barbara Boxer in 2010, I'd likely vote Libertarian. I've always been a "glass is half full" kind of person, but any honest appraisal of Arnold has to conclude that, for Republicans of any stripe, this glass is nine-tenths empty.

His latest budget maneuvers have severed his few remaining ties to fiscal sanity and past campaign promises. He still talks the right talk, mouthing the pious platitudes about getting spending under control, but fails completely to walk the walk. He broke his cornerstone campaign promise (no tax hikes) in return for nothing at all from the Democrats.

He demanded no hard, enforceable spending cap, so that horse is already out of the barn. Democrats, of course, know he's willing to raise taxes on his own, and, so, that they need make no concession on the point. His support in past budgets for laughably wrong revenue assumptions has come back to haunt him.

Put bluntly, he has run out of tricks; his hat hides no more rabbits. He has so poisoned the water with legislative Republicans that none of them — not even those moderates who had been favorably disposed to him — feel they owe him a thing. The legislative GOP has finally wised up and adopted the Democrat outlook on painful budget votes under this governor: if he really wants their votes, he'll have to buy them, the old fashioned way.

And as if that weren't enough, his inviting the state Supreme Court to overturn Proposition 8 is also there to burn any last bridges linking this governor with any member of the Republican rank and file, even those who opposed Prop. 8 — and a more-than-negligible minority did so. These folks are appalled at Schwarzenegger so openly showing his contempt for the clearly-spoken decision of his own constituents. Your *Spectator* — who makes a point of schmoozing with all shades of opinion (except, of course, Prohibitionists!) — has found no Republican of any stripe who likes the gov's autocratic act.

Beltway Boy Morton Kondracke shed the usual crocodile tears over the congressional GOP becoming "too conservative." Of the 176 or so Republicans in the new Congress, he said, "165 are from the [nation's] most conservative districts .... That is not the road back" for the GOP. That is: Republicans who actually win elections — *viz.,* conservatives like Tom McClintock — won't put the Party on "the road back" to national victory, presumably because their policies are too conservative — too "extreme" — for voters.

Never mind that Democrats just won with the *most* extreme left-wing ticket America's ever seen. Notice instead that congressional Republicans lost by governing not like conservatives, but like Democrats: refusing to cut taxes, spending like drunken sailers, by *not* reforming Social Security, health care, education, or the Endangered Species Act, by caving on judges, fumbling the economic crisis, and on and on. Voters threw the "mods" out leaving, Kondracke says, only principled conservatives — and that's bad for the GOP? Yes, says Mort. No, says good sense. Republicans should celebrate the departure of the losers who blocked the Party's electoral mandate — and leave the moaning to libs who talk about "other points of view" but can never quite believe anyone actually *has* another point of view.

— *A.P.C.*

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The Working Press

The Lightworker of Liberalism

The media behaves like the fawning crowds of a Leni Riefenstahl film in worshipping the president-elect.

GEORGE NEUMAYR

In June 2008, the *San Francisco Chronicle's* web site published a piece that captured the buffoonish hysteria swirling around Barack Obama. Its author, Mark Morford, had consulted spiritual gurus who informed him that Obama is a "Lightworker."

What's that? According to Morford, a Lightworker is "that rare kind of attuned being who has the ability to lead us not merely to new foreign policies or health care plans or whatnot, but who can actually help usher in a new way of being on the planet, of relating and connecting and engaging with this bizarre earthly experiment. These kinds of people actually help us evolve. They are philosophers and peacemakers of a very high order, and they speak not just to reason or emotion, but to the soul."

At first I wondered if this was a parody. It wasn't. Many Americans, some with press credentials, indeed believe Obama is the long-awaited-for Lightworker of Liberalism — the consummation of all things "progressive."

After he won in November, a cavalcade of cant along these lines flowed from the mouths and pens of supposedly skeptical journalists. At Obama headquarters (otherwise known as MSNBC), such journalists as Chris Matthews, aglow with the wonderfulness of it all, promised that he would "help" the Obama presidency succeed. Help? Any major media journalist making such a promise at the start of the Reagan years would have been fired.

Vanished at least for the moment is the media's proud understanding of itself as adversarial and free of jingoism. Suddenly it is okay for journalists to express open patriotism. The fawning presidential press corps of the Kennedy years is back. "Those of us too young to have known JFK's Camelot are going to have our own giddy Camelot II to enrapture and entertain us," declared *New York Magazine.*

In the days following Obama's election, NBC planned to unveil a DVD titled "Yes We Can: The Barack Obama Story." (If they did one called "A City on a Hill: The Ronald Reagan Story," I missed it.) *Newsweek* uncorked a commemorative issue that gushed over "Obama's American Dream."

Commentator after commentator spoke of the epoch-making significance of his election even as they strained to define what exactly that meant. Obama, for his part, felt confident enough to speak of a second term in his victory speech, promising that the country would get "there" not in one year or "one term" but eventually. Where is "there"? Neither Obama nor his supporters can quite pinpoint it, but apparently "there" refers to something along the lines of Morford's description above: a liberal "new way of being on the planet."

The media's pro-Obama coverage during the campaign had foreshadowed this coronation. According to the Pew Foundation, the media's coverage of the race was comically lopsided in Obama's favor: "Slightly fewer than a third of the stories about Obama were negative, whereas more than a third were positive and about the same number were neutral or mixed. More than half of the stories about McCain cast him in a negative light, whereas fewer than 2 in 10 were positive."

The coverage of Sarah Palin was even more unfavorable. The media's initial hostility to her grew more intense as the campaign unfolded. The media spent more time investigating her wardrobe than Obama's multiple ties to socialists and communists. From the coverage one would have thought wholesome Wasilla was more rid-

George Neumayr is California Political Review's *press critic.*

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dled with radicalism and corruption than Obama's Chicago.

PALIN'S GARBLED syntax also generated endless stories while Joe Biden's gaffes went almost unrecorded. The media yawned as he predicted an international crisis within six months of Obama's presidency, told a woman on a ropeline that America should no longer build coal plants, and declared that Obama would have been wiser to select Hillary Clinton as his vice presidential running mate.

Biden was good for at least one gaffe a day. On one campaign stop he mistakenly urged a wheelchair-bound paraplegic to "stand up" for a round of applause. During the vice presidential debate, he identified as his favorite restaurant in Delaware a place that had been closed since the 1980s.

To the media, Palin's factual bumbles were troubling, Biden's merely entertaining. Obama committed his share of blunders too, but that usually generated more scrutiny of his questioner than of him. After he made his "spread the wealth around" comment, the media unleashed its dormant investigative powers on the man who triggered it, "Joe the Plumber." A media that had pronounced Obama's associations with the anti-American fulminator Jeremiah Wright and shameless domestic terrorist Bill Ayers "irrelevant" happily dug up personal details on Middle America's Joe.

Much of Obama's campaign was based on guilt by association — associating John McCain with George Bush in every commercial and speech. Yet the media couldn't bring itself to examine Obama's twenty-year association with Wright, arguably one of the most formative influences on his adult life, as evidenced by Obama's choice of a title for his memoirs, *The Audacity of Hope,* from a Wright sermon.

Of course, the issue wasn't just association but agreement: Obama subscribes to Wright's liberation theology, which is Marxian in its premises. This was clear long before he revealed to Joe the Plumber his view of the purpose of taxation as income-leveling. He had

WHAT YOU HAVEN'T BEEN TOLD ABOUT GUN CONTROL

By SAM PAREDES

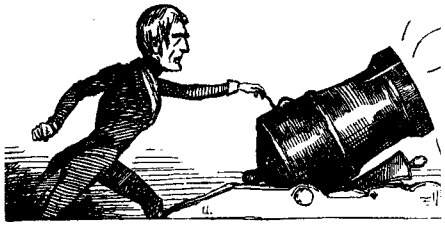
If you haven't heard, we didn't win in November. Those other folks did. You know, the ones who think we are nothing more than irrelevant fools, clinging to our guns and religion.

You'd better wake up and join the multitudes that are planning for the worst. Thousands of folks nationwide are lining up at gun stores buying all of the guns and ammunition they can afford. They are concentrating on the "black" semi-automatic rifles and shotguns as well as handguns because those are the ones they believe will be banned first, but they are also buying typical hunting and target guns too.

Gun buyers who live in states with "instant background checks" are having to wait two to six hours for clearances that normally take less than a minute to process. The systems are all clogged up. Gun dealers are having a tough time replenishing their inventories to keep up with the demand and manufacturers are working overtime to fill the need.

What's all the commotion about?

It's a legitimate fear that the Obama administration, with an increase in the strength of the most radical liberals in Congress (and in state legislatures, including California's), we will be see unprecedented efforts to ban, regulate, and/or tax firearms and ammunition out of existence.



The U.S. Supreme Court's recent ruling that the Second Amendment protects an individual right *(Heller v. DC)* will ultimately help us to fend off many of the upcoming assaults. But don't think Obama and his minions won't do all they can — and that is a lot — to cheat, to bypass, or rewrite the rules, to stack the courts, and to wage battles against the American people whenever and wherever they can. We've elected a "community organizer" as president — in radical circles, that's a street thug — so expect him and his gang to act accordingly.

You too might think about running down to your local gun store to buy whatever guns and ammunition you can afford ... while you can. CPR

Sam Paredes is executive director of Gun Owners of California.

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spoken repeatedly of confiscating the profits of oil companies, described religion as the opiate of the masses (telling an audience in San Francisco that economically embittered Americans were clinging to their "God and guns"), and glibly predicted that the coal industry would go "bankrupt" unless it adjusted to his environmental socialism.

In the case of Ayers, a former Weather Underground terrorist who regretted not doing "more" to harm America, the case again was not association but agreement: Obama had written a favorable blurb of one of Ayers' books (on the topic, of all things, of juvenile justice) and given money through a foundation he chaired to Ayers' lunatic educational programs.

Under the protection of the media, Obama could dismiss these agreements as meaningless while tying John McCain to Bush positions he didn't even support.

The *Los Angeles Times* figured into the campaign at the very end of it, not for anything the paper disclosed about Obama but for what it refused to disclose: editors resisted calls from the McCain campaign to release a videotape in its possession of Obama attending a dinner for the former PLO spokesman Rashid Kalidi. The paper primly explained that it couldn't violate an agreement with its source.

"Maybe some politicians would love to have a pet newspaper of their very own," Sarah Palin remarked on the campaign trail. "In this case, we have a newspaper willing to throw aside even the public's right to know in order to protect a candidate that its own editorial board has endorsed. And if there's a Pulitzer Prize category for excelling in kowtowing, then the *L.A. Times,* you're winning."

Competition in that category, particularly in the years to come, will be fierce. To paraphrase an old saying, where flattery for Liberalism's Lightworker is concerned, no excess is possible. CPR

Those in power over us

Common sense, for once, prevails

The U.S. High Court rules that 'species preservation' does not trump national security.

M. DAVID STIRLING

WHATEVER ONE'S thoughts about the war on terror or U.S. military activities in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other parts of the world, most of us believe our men and women in military service should have the best equipment and training available to defend our national security. But many people in the environmentalist community hold a different view. They say species protection laws such as the Endangered Species Act (ESA) should trump all human activities or endeavors, *even* the military.

A classic confrontation on this issue began in January 2007 when the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) and other environmental groups filed suit under ESA to stop the Navy's use of sonar during real battle-like training exercises in waters off the coast of Southern California. They offered no documented evidence to support a claim that the sonar sound pulses emitted through the water by Navy vessels searching for pretended hostile submarines harmed beaked

M. David Stirling is vice president of Pacific Legal Foundation (www.pacificlegal.org), the nation's premiere courtroom advocate for balanced and common sense environmental regulation. He is author of the new book, Green Gone Wild — Elevating Nature Above Human Rights *(www.greengonewildbook.com)*

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whales, dolphins, and other ESA-protected marine mammals. Even so, their suit (*Winter v. NRDC)* asked the court to halt the Navy's use of sonar during the exercises to protect these marine species from alleged harms.

FOR MORE than 40 years, Navy training exercises have used mid-frequency active sonar off the coast near San Diego. This area contains the unique features necessary for simultaneous, integrated training of air, sea, and undersea forces. Although these exercises are aimed at preparing sailors and Marines for a full range of possible naval conflict situations, one of their primary purposes is to train naval personnel in sonar proficiency to detect quiet-running diesel-electric submarines. The Navy regards its sonar training exercises as the only effective means to prepare its naval strike groups to detect these stealth submarines before they close within weapons range.

Although the early stealth diesel-electric submarines that triggered the Navy's initial sonar training program were produced and used by the Soviet Union beginning in the mid-1960s, some 377 modern versions of this relatively cheap submarine ($200 million for the Russian version, $300 million for the French) are now owned and operated by 39 countries. North Korea's and China's stealth subs now shadow U.S. warships in the western Pacific while Iran's quiet-running subs operate in the waters of the Middle East. Russia has contracted to deliver stealth submarines to Venezuela, Algeria, and Indonesia within the next couple of years.

Before the NRDC lawsuit, the Navy had scheduled a series of rigorous military exercises to run from February 2007 through January 2009 to train and certify thousands of naval personnel for deployment to the western Pacific and the Middle East. Before the suit, the Navy issued a lengthy environmental assessment. It stated, among other things, that the past 40 years showed no documented incidents of harm, injury, or death to marine mammals resulting from exposure to sonar in the Southern California training area. Also, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the federal agency responsible for protecting and preserving marine mammals, issued a Biological Opinion concluding that the Navy's use of sonar was not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any ESA-listed species of marine mammals.

Nevertheless, the federal district court issued a preliminary injunction restricting the Navy's use of sonar so severely that it negated the training value of the exercises. The Navy appealed to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeal. In January 2008, while the case was pending

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before the Ninth Circuit, the chief of Naval Operations determined that the lower court's restrictions on sonar use imposed unacceptable risks to national security and to the timely deployment of strike groups to the Middle East. President George W. Bush issued an exemption to "enable the Navy to train effectively and to certify ... strike groups for deployment" in support of operational and combat activities "essential to national security."

Despite these clear statements of the importance of the sonar training exercises to national security, the Ninth Circuit, with minor changes, affirmed the district court's restrictions on the use of sonar, declaring that "the armed forces must take precautionary measures to comply with the [environmental] law during its training." The U. S. Supreme Court voted to review the appeal of *Winter v. NRDC* because of the issue of ESA, in effect, thwarting national security preparedness.

Pacific Legal Foundation's friend-of-the-court brief to the Supreme Court challenged the long-held notion within the federal judiciary that ESA is a super statute that trumps all other public interest considerations — a view that first emerged in the Supreme Court's 1978 *T.V.A. v. Hill* decision (the snail darter case). In *Hill,* the Court majority declared that, under ESA, Congress intended to preserve plant and wildlife species "whatever the cost." Ever since the Court's unfortunate use of that imperious phrase, federal district and appellate courts have regularly cited it as their basis for elevating species preservation above all other socially beneficial public interests. PLF argued that removal of that mandate would restore, in injunction cases, trial court judges' traditional role of weighing and balancing the equities between species preservation and competing human endeavors.

In November, the Supreme Court restored a measure of common sense to the equation by overturning the Ninth Circuit's injunction. This much-needed win for the Navy and for national security also is a big victory for balance in ESA-based injunction cases. For 30 years federal courts have acted as a rubber stamp for the often undocumented claims and fear-mongering of uncompromising environmentalist groups wielding ESA like a club. Now, finally, America's highest court has said enough is enough. This belated tip toward balance and common sense in the area of national security should be extended to reign in the routine elevation of ESA species preservation above other socially beneficial human interests. Time will tell us whether or not it does so. CPR

A Closer Look

Restoring faith in the 'Republican Brand'

'Moderates' at the top destroyed voter trust in the GOP; conservative leadership alone can regain it.

MICHAEL S. FREDENBURG

Many readers will be familiar with the age-old philosophical question: if a tree falls in a forest and no one is there to hear it, does it make a sound? As Republicans and conservatives, we will be asking ourselves a question in the same philosophical vein, updated for current events: if Obama and/or his administration commit some serious gaffe or mistake and the media ignore it, did the mistake actually occur? In other

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words, can we at all count on any major media objectivity regarding the Obama presidency, or must we view them as an extension of the Obama administration?

UNFORTUNATELY, THE answer is: as an extension of the Obama administration. Going in, reality according to the media (and much of the American public) is that the nation's economic mess is the fault of President Bush and the Republicans. Further, the same media is already establishing low expectations among the people for President Obama on the premise that the Republican mess is so gargantuan that even Obama's dynamic, progressive leadership will be challenged in trying to rectify it.

This is the perceived reality going forward. Persuading the nation to believe otherwise will be difficult, in the first place because Republicans *do* bear much of the responsibility for the economic mess. While many argue that the sub-prime mortgage crisis began with the Community Reinvestment Act of 1977, the first Bush administration also played a large part in fueling the "irrational compassion" leading to the crisis. In 2001/2002, President Bush came up with "America's Home Ownership Challenge," to pressure Freddie Mac, Fannie Mae, and private sector lenders to make more than 5.5 million new home loans to low-income and minority borrowers. Twenty-four or so of America's largest lending institution pledged $1.1 trillion in new loans to make it happen. These loans that, under normal circumstances, would never have been made, coupled with the Gramm-Leach-Biley Act (Republican-backed legislation allowing banks to purchase mortgage-backed securities), provided fuel for the Community Reinvestment Act-started fire. (Additional Democrat-supported laws also played their part.) So the mechanisms that drove Freddie, Fannie, and private lenders to dive into the sub-prime mortgage disaster do show Republican as well as Democrat fingerprints.

Part of Bush's stated goal in proposing "America's Home Ownership Challenge" was to create construction jobs to counteract massive losses in manufacturing employment that had hit the economy at the time. For a while it was fairly successful. However, replacing manufacturing jobs with much more cyclical housing- and construction-related jobs was never a good idea. Economic growth built on a foundation of massive government and private deficit spending could not last. "America's Home Ownership Challenge," as only one example indicating the consequences of eight years big government Republicanism, shows the negative results not only for America's economic health, but for the Republican Party — for the ongoing destruction of the Republican "Brand." President George H. W. Bush began the destruction, going out of his way to trash the Reagan legacy and the Reagan coalition as soon as he won the election of 1998.

Does this criticism seem harsh? If we are to save the Republican Party, we will have to consider, clearly and realistically, what landed it in its current state. Bottom line is that President Herbert Walker Bush, although a good man and a Christian, was no conservative. Not being conservative, he was never able to articulate a conservative vision for the country, and, of course, could not educate the country on the value of conservative ideas and policies.

Yes, the Republican Party, to win elections, must always attract more than just conservative support. But unless conservatives regain control of the Party, the GOP's present minority status is likely to continue and puts the Party in danger of going the way of the Whigs. At the state, federal, and local level, conservatives should put forward conservative candidates capable of restoring voter respect for "the Republican brand" by presenting *Republican* conservatism as an attractive, common sense set of policies and ideas that connect with average voters. Ronald Reagan, a philosophical man, could, and did, tie the GOP to positive images in voters' minds by communicating important truths in a down-to-earth fashion that persuaded and educated the American public. His integrity in office then convinced voters they could trust him and his Party. The GOP must regain that trust. The only way is to find and elect candidates who possess the ability, sincerity, *and courage* to follow Reagan's lead, both in campaigning *and* in office.

FINALLY, THIS is not about saving the Republican Party. It is about saving the country. False bravado aside, America faces unprecedented economic and moral challenges. The Democrat answer to them is based on a false, destructive world view. It is completely wrong, but is made to appear appealing in its promises. Conservatives are challenged to show they are shrewder, more creative, and more persistent than their opponents. In this political environment, to be merely as good as the opposition means continuing to lose the battle for the culture and, ultimately, seeing the destruction of the country we love. CPR

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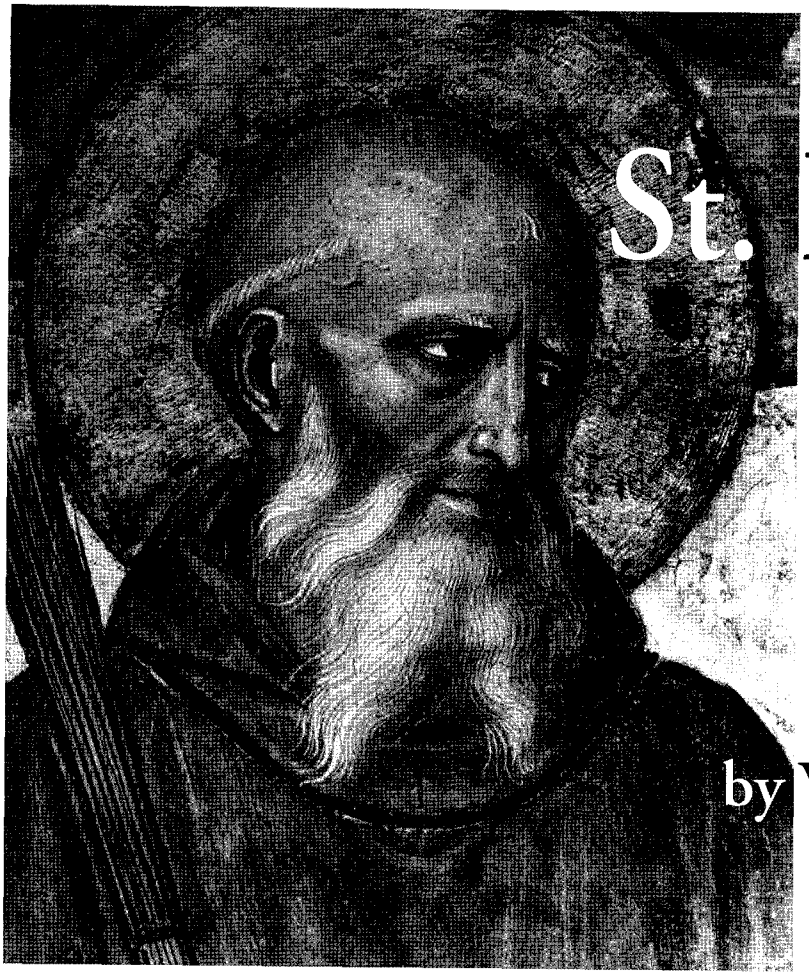

St. Benedict

by Whittaker Chambers

One-time communist spy Whittaker Chambers broke with the Communist Party and Soviet espionage in 1938. Beginning 10 years later and lasting through more than two years of congressional testimony and courtroom warfare that captured the attention and imagination of the nation and the world, his testimony exposed extensive infiltration of Franklin Roosevelt's administration by several networks of communist traitors in the 1930s. The highest-ranking Stalinist operative sent to prison through Chambers' testimony was Alger Hiss. Over 20 years, Hiss held many top posts in government and civil society, playing a key role as presidential advisor at the 1945 Yalta Conference. At Yalta, Hiss wrote what eventually became the Roosevelt/Stalin plan for a new Dark Age to enshroud under communism three hundred million Russians, Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, East Germans, Austrians, Hungarians, and all the Christian Balkans (to borrow Chambers" words). The Stalinist night remained until the late 1980s, when America, led by Ronald Reagan, forced its retreat.

Chambers' own Christmas — coming of Christ — occured in the late 1940s while he worked as a Time *magazine senior editor. He converted to Christianity, joining the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers).*

Like the Dark Ages he writes about here, a cloud of unknowing has descended on this major figure in 20th Century American and world history. The leftists who dominate too much of our culture want Chambers forgotten. Hiss's conviction and Chambers' revelations helped convince President Harry Truman and the American people that the Soviets were our enemy, representing a mortal threat that had to be resisted. America's vigorous and eventually victorious prosecution of the Cold War began largely with Chambers' public stand against communism. His autobiographical book Witness *chronicles the Hiss case and the civilizational tragedy of communism. Most importantly, it, like his essay on St. Benedict, points the way back to Christmas: to our salvation, our freedom, our sanity and humanity through knowing God, the knowledge that alone destroys man's Dark Ages throughout history. Chambers died in 1961.*

— editor

Queen Victoria left this world almost at the moment that I chanced to enter it. Her memory, when I was old enough to identify it, fell thinly across my earliest childhood. People still spoke of "the Queen," as if in all history there had been only one and everybody must know at once that Queen Victoria was meant.

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Somewhat later, I sensed that her going had stirred a deep-set uneasiness, as if with her a part of the mainland of human experience had sunk into the sea and no one quite knew what further subsidences and commotions to expect. Yet, in those far off days, no one ever chanted to me that grim line of the Queen's favorite poet:

And the great aeon sinks in blood:

though I was not very old when I had the "Death of Arthur" read to me in full, and, after the depressingly long glories of the winter moon, I noted with relief that

The new sun rose, bringing the new year.

With the rest of my generation, I grew in that sun's illusory light. For the historical skies of my boyhood were only infrequently troubled, chiefly by a triad of figures powerful and unpredictable enough to thrill from time to time the nerve of reality. They were, of course, in America, Theodore Roosevelt; in England, King Edward VII; and, on the continent of Europe, bestriding it like a self-inflated colossus, the German Kaiser. Each had a characteristic motif; too, like a Wagnerian hero: a little repetitive phrase that set the historic mood or forecast that each, for good or ill, was about to vault again upon the world stage, to give some new tingling turn to the plot. Thus, from the heart of Europe, would come characteristic variations on the Bismarckian theme of *Blut und Eisen ["Blood and Iron," a phrase attributed to Bismarck to mean that war, not parliamentary manuevers, would decide the great issues of the day — editor].* In America, rose blithe shouts of "Bully! It's bully!" While Edwardian England had reversed the plea in which Swinburne exhorted Walt Whitman to "send but a song oversea to us," and both shores of the Atlantic rocked to the surge and thunder of Tarara-boom-de-ay. Long before I had the slightest notion what the barbaric sounds might mean, as language or destiny, I listened fascinated to people chanting:

> A Brussels carpet on the floor:
> An elevator at the door:
> Tarara-boom-de-ay; Tarara-boom-de-ay!

It was not only because of its gayness that it embedded itself in my memory. For what others found gay, I found indefinably ominous, as fixing a tone, a touch of dissolution that, even as a sensitive child, I could not possibly have explained to myself or anybody else. But one day, much later, the echo of Tarara-boom-de-ay fused itself unexpectedly with something that would seem to have nothing to do with it — a more or less random remark by one of my college instructors in Contemporary Civilization. Contemporary Civilization, a course required for all freshmen at Columbia College, was taught by several young men whom I remember chiefly as rather lugubrious — disillusioned veterans of the First World War, and a conscientious objector who had refused to take part in it. One day, the objector, staring at some point far beyond the backs of our heads, observed that "the world is entering upon a new Dark Ages."

It was one of the few things that I carried away from Contemporary Civilization, required for all freshmen. And it was not so much the meaning of the words, which I was far too unfledged to understand, as the toneless despondency with which they were uttered that struck me. That, and their acceptance of the Dark Ages as something relevant, and possibly recurrent in history.

For under the sunlit skies of my boyhood, the Dark Ages were seldom mentioned: if at all, chiefly by way of contrast to the light of our progress. For the voice of that time was, at least as it reached me, wholly incapable of the irony with which, little more than a decade later, Jean de Bosschére would ask: *"Qui se leva pour dire que nous ne sommes pas en plein jour?" ["Who got up to say that we are not in broad daylight?"]*

The Dark Ages were inexcusable and rather disreputable — a bad time when the machine of civilization in its matchless climb to the twentieth century had sheared a whole rank of king-pins and landed mankind in a centuries-long ditch. At best, it was a time when monks sat in unsanitary cells with a human skull before them, and copied and recopied, for lack of more fruitful employment, the tattered records of a dead antiquity. That was the Dark Ages at best, which, as anybody could see, was not far from the worst.

If a bright boy, leafing through history, asked: "How did the Dark Ages come about?" he might be told"Rome fell!" — as if a curtain simply dropped. Boys of 10 or 12, even if bright, are seldom bright enough to say to themselves: "Surely, Rome did not fall in a day." If a boy had asked: "But were there no great figures in the Dark Ages, like Teddy Roosevelt, King Edward, and the Kaiser?" he might well have been suspected of something unhealthy, like the habits and habitats of spiders. Had he persisted and asked: "But isn't it clear that the Dark Ages are of a piece with our age of light, that our civilization is by origin Catholic, that, in fact, we cannot understand what we have become without understanding what we came from?" he would have been suspected of something much worse than priggery — a distressing turn to popery.

I was no such bright boy (or youth). I reached young

This article was published originally in Saints For Now, *edited by Clare Boothe Luce, 1952, Sheed and Ward.*

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manhood serene in the knowledge that, between the failed light of antiquity and the buzzing incandescence of our own time, there had intervened a thousand years of darkness from which the spirit of man had begun to liberate itself (intellectually) first in the riotous luminosity of the Renaissance, in Humanism, in the eighteenth century, and at last (politically) in the French Revolution. For the dividing line between the Dark Ages is not fast, and they were easily lumped together.

To be sure, even before Queen Victoria died, the pre-Raphaelites had popularized certain stage properties of the Middle Ages. And on the Continent there had been Novalis, to mention only one name (but no one in my boyhood mentioned Novalis). There had been Huysmans (we knew Huysmans, but his name was touched with decadence). There was a fad of the Gothic and figures like Viollet-le-Duc: while an obscure American, Henry Adams, was even then composing *Mont St. Michel and Chartres,* and inditing certain thoughts on the Virgin and the Dynamo that would echo briefly above the clink of their swizzle sticks in the patter of my generation.

I was in my twenties, a young intellectual savage in college with thousands of others, before the fact slowly dawned upon me that, for a youth always under the spell of history, the history I knew was practically no history at all. It consisted of two disjointed parts — the history of Greece and Rome, with side trips to Egypt and the Fertile Crescent: and a history of the last four hundred years of Europe and America. Of what lay in between, what joined the parts and gave them continuity, and the pulse of life and breath of spirit, my ignorance was darker than any Dark Age. Less by intelligence than by the kind of sixth sense which makes us aware of objects ahead in the dark, I divined that a main land mass of the history of Western civilization loomed hidden beyond my sight.

I turned briefly to medieval history. But the distinguished teachers who first guided me into the Dark Ages seemed, even to my blindness, not too sure of their own way. They knew facts, more facts than I would ever know. Yet in their understanding of the facts something was missing, something that would enable them to feel that the life of the times they were exploring was of one tissue with the life of ours, that neither could be divided from the other, without an arterial tearing, that neither could be understood without the other. Their exposition even of so obvious a problem as the causes for the fall of the Roman West left me with a sense of climbing railless stairs above a chasm at night. Rome fell, I learned, because of the barbarian hordes and a series of great barbarian leaders. H. G. Wells would presently startle me with the information that the hordes had been comparative handfuls among the populations they conquered, while, somewhat later, I would come to believe the barbarian leaders were scarcely more barbarian than the Romans, that many of them were disaffected officials of the Roman state and their conduct was not so much that of invaders as what we should now call Fifth Columnists.

Or I was taught that Rome's collapse was due in part to the disrepair of the Roman roads and the breakdown of communications. Or the resurgence of the Pontine marshes and the high incidence of malaria at Rome. Or that the conquest of the East had introduced alien and indigestible masses into the Empire, and corrupted Rome, and so it fell. But even a collegiate savage could scarcely fail to note that it was precisely the corrupt Eastern half of the Empire that survived as a political unit, and, for another 800 years, stood against the vigorous East, and was the bulwark of the fallen West.

There were other facts and factors. My ignorance could question them only so far, and then not their reality for the most part, but their power to explain by themselves an event so complex and so thunderous as the crash of a civilization. Some more subtle dissolvent, I sensed, must also have been, undivined, at work. I thought I had caught a hint of it in Salvianus' *moritur et ridet:* "The Roman Empire is luxurious, but it is filled with misery. It is dying but it laughs — *moritur et ridet."* But Salvian, we learned with a deflecting smile, was an extremist, though, in the hindsight of disaster, his foresight would scarcely seem overstated. What interested me was that men had smiled complacently at Salvian's words when he spoke, and men still smiled at them complacently a thousand years later — the same kind of men, I was beginning to suspect, upon, I also suspected, a similar turning point of history.

In any case, for me it was too late. What the missing something was in the crisis of Rome I was not to learn in classrooms. The crisis of civilization in my own time had caught me in its undertow and soon swept me far beyond that earlier Dark Ages. Not until it had cast me back upon its rocks, by grace a defeated fugitive from its forces, would I again find peace to seek to determine what, if anything, that mortal experience had taught me about the history of our own time, or any other.

This century was half gone, and with it more than half my life, that at that moment seemed all but to have ended in an ordeal with which my name is linked, when someone, seeking only to comfort me, once more directed my eyes to that point in the past from which,

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some 30 years before, I had abruptly taken them. Anne Ford, my friend of many years standing, sent me, from the Monastery of Gethsemani, a little silver medal, blessed in my family's name and mine, by Father Louis — Thomas Merton of *The Seven-Storey Mountain,* who, as a later student, had sat in the same college classrooms, listening to some of the same instructors I had known. On the medal was an image of St. Benedict.

I found myself asking who St. Benedict had been. I knew that he had founded a monastic order, which bore his name, and that for it he had written a famous Rule. I knew that he had uttered a precept that I had taken for my own: *Laborare est orare* — to labor is to pray. I had once written a little news story about plans for the restoration of his monastery of Monte Cassino after its destruction in the World War of 1939. What I had written had presumably been read at least by one hundred thousand people (so much for journalism in our time). But a seeker after knowledge at any age, certainly one 50 years old, must begin by confessing that he probably knew less about St. Benedict than many a pupil in parochial school. Nor, had I asked a dozen friends, regarded as highly intelligent by themselves and the world, could one of them have told me much more about St. Benedict than I knew myself. The fact that such ignorance could exist, could be taken as a matter of course, was more stunning than the abyss of ignorance itself.

For the briefest prying must reveal that, simply in terms of history, leaving aside for a moment his sanctity, St. Benedict was a colossal figure on a scale of importance in shaping the civilization of the West against which few subsequent figures could measure. And of those who might measure in terms of historic force, almost none could measure in terms of good achieved.

Nor was St. Benedict an isolated peak. He was only one among ranges of human height that reached away from him in time in both directions, past and future, but of which, with one or two obvious exceptions, one was as ignorant as of Benedict: St. Jerome, St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, Pope St. Leo the Great, Pope St. Gregory the Great, St. Francis of Assisi, Hildebrand (Pope Gregory VII).

Clearly, a cleft cut across the body of Christendom itself, and raised an overwhelming question: What, in fact, was the civilization of the West? If it was Christendom, why had it turned its back on half its roots and meanings and become cheerfully ignorant of those who had embodied them? If it was not Christendom, what was it? And what were those values that it claimed to assert against the forces of active evil that beset it in the greatest crisis of history since the fall of Rome? Did the failure of the Western World to know what it was lie at the root of its spiritual despondency, its intellectual confusion, its moral chaos, the dissolving bonds of faith and loyalty within itself, its swift political decline in barely four decades from hegemony of the world to a demoralized rump of Europe little larger than it had been in the crash of the Roman West, and an America still disputing the nature of the crisis, its gravity, whether it existed at all, or what to do about it?

Answers to such questions could not be extemporized. At the moment, a baffled seeker could do little more than grope for St. Benedict's hand and pray in all humbleness to be led over the traces of the saint's progress to the end that he might be, if not more knowledgeable, at least less nakedly ignorant. The biographical facts were synoptic enough and chiefly to be found in the *Dialogues* of Pope St. Gregory the Great or inferred between the lines of St. Benedict's Rule.

Benedict had been born, toward the end of the fifth century, of good family in the sturdy countryside of Nursia, which lay close enough to Rome to catch the tremors of its sack, in 410, by Alaric's West Goths (the first time in eight hundred years that the city had fallen) and the shock of its sack by the Vandals, who, in 455 completed the material and human havoc that the West Goths had begun. To a Rome darkened by such disasters, Benedict had been sent to school as a boy of 14 or 15. There he was shaken by the corrupt customs of his schoolmates, it is said. But we may surely conjecture that he was touched, too, like sensitive minds in our own day, by a sense of brooding, indefinable dis-

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aster, of doom still incomplete, for the Dark Ages were scarcely more than begun.

The boy fled from Rome, or, as we might say, ran away from school, and settled with a loose-knit congregation about 30 miles from the city. There he performed his first miracle. When, as a result, men called him good, he fled again. For, though he was a boy, he was clearly old enough to fear the world, especially when it praises. This time he fled into the desert wilderness near Subiaco, where for three years he lived alone in a cave. To those who presently found him, he seemed more like a wild creature than a man. Those were the years of the saint's conquest of his flesh, his purgation, illumination, and perhaps his prayerful union with God. They must also have been the years when he plumbed all the perils of solitary austerities and the hermit life, by suffering them.

At any rate, the saint left Subiaco to enter on his first experience in governing a community of monks. He returned to Subiaco, and, in 12 years, organized 12 Benedictine communities. His days were filled with devotion and with labor and touched with miracles. But again human factors threatened failure. St. Benedict with a few companions withdrew to Monte Cassino, some 80 miles southeast of Rome. There he overthrew an ancient altar of Apollo (for paganism was still rooted in the countryside), and there he raised his own altar. On those heights, he organized his community, ruled his monks, performed new miracles, distilled his holy experience in his Holy Rule. There he died at a date which is in dispute, but was probably about 547, when the campaigns of the Eastern Roman Empire to recover Italy from the East Goths had so permanently devastated the Peninsula that the irruption of the Lombards into the ruins brought a new horror rather than any novelty in havoc.

Against that night and that ruin, like a man patiently lighting a wick in a tempest, St. Benedict set his Rule. Others had written monastic Rules before: St. Pachomius and St. Basil for example. St. Benedict called his the Holy Rule, setting it down and setting it apart from all others, with a consciousness of its singular authority that has led some biographers to speculate whether he had not been prompted by the Holy See to write it. Perhaps it is permissible to hazard that his authority need have proceeded from nothing more than that unwavering confidence that commonly sustains genius.

What was there in this little book that changed the world? To us, at first glance, it seems prosaic enough, even fairly obvious. That, indeed, is the heart of its inspiration. In an age of pillar saints and furiously competing athletes of the spirit, when men plunged by thousands into the desert, in a lunge toward God, and in revulsion from man, St. Benedict's Rule brought a saving and creative sanity. Its temper was that of moderation as against excesses of zeal, of fruitful labor as against austerities pushed to the point of fruitlessness, of discipline as against enthusiasm, of continence of spirit and conduct as against incontinence.

It has been said (by T. F. Lindsay in his sensitive and searching *St. Benedict)* that, in a shattered society, the Holy Rule, to those who submitted to its mild but strict sway, restored the discipline and power of Roman family life.

I venture that it did something else as well. For those who obeyed it, it ended three great alienations of the spirit whose action, I suspect, touched on that missing something which my instructors failed to find among the causes of the fall of Rome. The same alienations, I further suspect, can be seen at their work of dissolution among ourselves, and are perhaps among the little noticed reasons why men turn to communism. They are: the alienation of the spirit of man from traditional authority; his alienation from the idea of traditional order; and a crippling alienation that he feels at the point where civilization has deprived him of the joy of simple productive labor.

These alienations St. Benedict fused into a new surge of the human spirit by directing the frustrations that informed them into the disciplined service of God. At the touch of his mild inspiration, the bones of a new order stirred and clothed themselves with life, drawing to itself much of what was best and most vigorous among the ruins of man and his work in the Dark Ages, and conserving and shaping its energy for that unparalleled outburst of mind and spirit in the Middle Ages. For about the Benedictine monasteries what we, having casually lost the Christian East, now casually call the West, once before regrouped and saved itself.

So bald a summary can do little more than indicate the dimensions of the Benedictine achievement and plead for its constant re-examination. Seldom has the need been greater. For we sense, in the year 1952, that we may stand closer to the year 410 than at any other time in the centuries since. If that statement seems as extreme as any of Salvian's, three hundred million Russians, Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, East Germans, Austrians, Hungarians, and all the Christian Balkans, would tell you that it is not — would tell you if they could lift their voices through the night of the new Dark Ages that have fallen on them. For them the year 410 has already come. CPR

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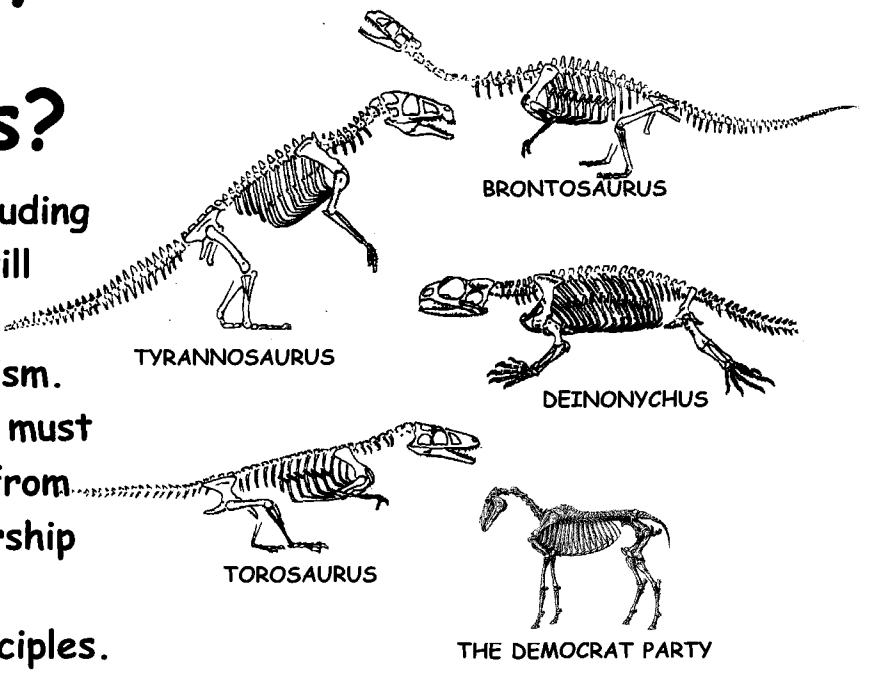
Which Party is out of step with voters?

Americans — including Californians — still reject bedrock Democrat liberalism. To win, the GOP must only free itself from 'moderate' leadership unworthy of its conservative principles.



by Gregory Sanford

A recent office clean up session produced from my archives an old *Los Angeles Times* cartoon by Paul Conrad (dated Oct. 5, 1989). It pictures, without comment, five skeletal displays, as if in an archeological museum, sequentially labeled "Brontosaurus," "Tyrannosaurus," "Deinonychus," "Torosaurus," and, last — under a donkey's skeleton — "The Democratic Party."

Such "chance" manifestations are sometimes downright spooky in their timeliness. Conrad's illustrated statement indicates the mood of liberals (of which, in case anyone out there is too young to remember, Mr. Conrad was one — up to the eyebrows) during the early H. W. Bush administration. Inasmuch as it was published only about three years before Bill Clinton's presidential victory, which removed a GOP incumbent, wisdom or prudence or both would seem to indicate caution now that similar conclusions (similarly wrong) on the demise of the Republican Party are appearing.

For instance, the Dec. 8 *San Francisco Chronicle* quoted *California Target Book* co-Editor, political analyst Tony Quinn with regard to the November election saying "There's been a broad repudiation of traditional conservative Republicans in California." Quinn's statement followed a lead sentence arguing that "California Republicans have come out of the November election in danger of slipping into political irrelevance across much of the state." The *Chronicle* article goes on to cite falling GOP registration figures and slippage in legislative seats held, but Quinn's assessment ("a broad repudiation of traditional conservative Republicans") repeats the hoary Democrat/major media myth brought forward whenever the GOP takes an electoral shellacking of any kind for any reason. Proven wrong on almost every occasion, this silly notion, like the slasher-monster in all 10 installments of a Jamie Lee Curtis horror film series, simply won't be killed. It is, apparently, just too much fun bringing it back again and again and again. Nonetheless, the idea that GOP losses are traceable to conservative issue positions is, if anything, even more devoid of foundation and contrary to the facts now than it usually is.

First of all — to belabor a point that Mr. Quinn somehow keeps forgetting — the "California Republican" who, more than any other, defines the Party's image among most voters is *Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger,* a Democrat in all but name. The governor favors cave-in politics, most clearly illustrated by his enthusiasm — contradicting every element of his recall election campaign — for fiscally irresponsible government spending sprees financed by tax hikes. He opposes virtually every bedrock pro-family GOP position and

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policy. His extreme opposition to Prop. 8 extends to his having urged the Supreme Court to overturn the law, ignoring the comfortable majority of California voters that supported it (8's victory margin exceeded 600,000 votes) in that very November election which, we now hear, showed "Republicans ... in danger of slipping into political irrelevance." Indeed they are, as far as the name "Schwarzenegger" defines the Party, but Schwarzenegger Republican is the polar opposite of "traditional conservative Republican." Most Californians identify the GOP with a renegade governor, a spendthrift Congress (that repeatedly dissed *its* campaign promises), a Bush administration that failed to lift a finger to reign in said Congress's budgetary (and myriad other forms of) irresponsibility, and by a presidential nominee who killed his chance for victory by backing, at a critical moment in the campaign, what now appears to be the first in a series of socialistic "bailouts." Instead of matching his conservative rhetoric of the campaign trail with conservative action when he had a chance to act, John McCain reverted to "moderate" Republican form. This is a GOP that, so far from representing conservative principles, had itself renounced them — and renounced not just the principles, but the very idea of governing according to any principles whatever. Voters, as they often will, repudiated leaders they saw as having substituted self-serving expediency for honor in office.

Incomprehensible communism

... the essence of communism is quite beyond the limits of human understanding. It is hard to believe that people could actually plan such things and carry them out. And it is precisely because its essence is beyond comprehension, perhaps, that communism is so difficult to understand.

— Alexander Solzhenitsyn, speech to the AFL-CIO, July 9, 1975

James Burnham's landmark 1964 book, one of the American conservative movement's foundational books, *Suicide of the West,* argues in its opening pages that "In the years 1917-21 most of the huge Russian Empire, under the command of the Bolsheviks, became not merely altogether separate from Western civilization but directly hostile to it in all these senses, in the moral, philosophical and religious as well as the material, political and social dimensions .... The new rulers understood their initial territory to be the base for the development of a wholly new civilization, distinguished absolutely not only from the West but from all preceding civilizations, and destined ultimately to incorporate the entire earth and all mankind."

As Alexander Solzhenitsyn pointed out in addressing the AFL-CIO, however, it is beyond human understanding that wise men, or any men at all, should actually reject *all* preceding civilizations, renounce *all* human experience and embark on a course to create a new man, an unknown future, a blind beginning founded on only one principle: that everything past is evil, that "everything human is alien," as David Horowitz put it in his autobiographical essay in *Destructive Generation.* The result is that few people believe that the communist idea is what it is, even as it plays out before their eyes. Barack Obama, for instance, spends his politically formative life in the care and teaching of America-hating revolutionaries like Rev. Jeremiah Wright and Bill Ayers while drawing his inspiration from Saul Alinsky. Yet the obvious lesson it teaches is simply dismissed with a sneer by Obama's Democrat rank-and-file constituency. The *major* — anything but *mainstream* — media writes it off as just so much right-wing paranoia. The idea that a man possessed by a conviction like communism could become president of the United States is simply incomprehensible, so Democrat voters give Obama a pass.

But even the most cursory scan of specific issues reveals that nearly the opposite of Tony Quinn's point is the truth. To wit: *California voters have broadly repudiated the left-wing ideas that dominate the Democrat Party in this state and nationally.* Putting it the other way, it is the *Democrats* that have shown themselves too extreme both for California and America. The media amply demonstrated the truth of this conclusion in its borderline schizophrenic message about Sarah Palin, alternating "she's a dangerous menace" with "she's a comical fool." (The word *schizophrenia* derives from a Greek phrase that means "split mind.")

California's Proposition 8 provides another illustration of the lengths to which today's Democrat leadership has declared itself hostile to our civilization in its moral, philosophical, and religious as well as material, political, and social dimensions. The proposition was passed, as is now widely known, because two key Democrat constituencies — black and Hispanic voters — supported it strongly. It passed in Los Angeles County, which, in itself, speaks volumes about how out of step, how near political irrelevance, are the Democrat hierarchy's true positions. Top Democrats believe wholeheartedly in an anti-family absolutism simply at loggerheads with the most basic ideas of two key elements of the political coalition that sustains them. Geographically, Democrats must win L.A. County to win statewide in California, and they must win California to win nationally. Yet on the bedrock issue of the fami-

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ly, they lost both the county and the state. Since the election, top Democrats have desperately tried to cover their embarrassment, reminding this observer of China's pathetic communist regime during the 1989 "Beijing Spring" in Tienanmin Square that suddenly revealed the communists' irrelevance to the true aspirations of the Chinese people. With Orwellian word-mangling and black-shirt thuggery, the anti-Prop. 8 folks now commit hate crimes against Mormons and call anyone who supports the family a bigot.

What's at stake is the Democrats' high-wire act as hate-America leftists posing with ever more threadbare cover as "mainstream" politicos. They know that any uncovering of the truth that convinces rank and file Americans even to begin to consider seriously the true positions of these "leaders" sends tremors through their high wire, and that these vibrations could begin a shaking capable of toppling the whole Democrat political empire. The Obama administration's superficial backtracking on cabinet appointments and stated policy positions confirms what scarcely needs confirming: that these radicals know their political power rests on the altogether human reluctance to believe that communism could possibly be what it in fact is. They know they must continue to hide their broad aims by maintaining an outward "moderation" while pursuing their honest objectives in the background.

It is the Republicans' game to win or lose

Of all people, Tony Quinn pointed out this exact Democrat vulnerability in a 2002 *Los Angeles Times* column headlined: "A Loyal Constituency Is Restless."

> .... sometimes Democrats seem biased against, and often contemptuous of, positions of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. This development could provide an opening for Republicans, which could be especially important in California, where the church-going Catholic electorate is increasingly Asian — especially Filipinos and Vietnamese — and Latino ....
>
> In California, the Democratic strain with Catholic voters goes beyond the cultural clash. The party's strong stand on certain social issues puts it at odds with several official Catholic positions. Governor Gray Davis, although a Catholic, has imposed a pro-abortion-rights litmus test for his judicial appointments that goes well beyond being just pro-choice. The Democratic Party strongly opposed Proposition 22, a successful measure on the 2000 ballot that defined marriage as a union between a man and a woman, while Catholic bishops, citing the church's traditional teaching, supported it.

With Prop. 8, this reality/perception disconnect played out precisely as Quinn explained it, providing an opportunity for the conservative position. It could play out in the same way many more times in the future, as it has in the past, with regard to electoral candidates — provided Democrats don't re-think their anti-family, anti-religion positions, which no one expects them to do. The game is thus in Republicans' hands to win or lose. They lose, as we've just witnessed for the umpteenth time, when they entrust their Party to timid, "moderate" leadership, leaders who often share powerful Democrats' contempt for family and religion.

They win, as we saw most dramatically with Ronald Reagan and, just now, with Sarah Palin and the timely appearance of Joe the Plumber, when Republicans choose genuinely conservative leaders, symbols, and messages: limited government, respect for America's bedrock social and governing institutions, and so forth. If this point needs confirmation, it is supplied by Democrats' frantic efforts to smear Joe the Plumber and Palin. It is also evident in their giddy Camelot campaign to imbue the Obama administration with a positively gnostic aura as some sort of second coming: "The Age of Aquarius" revisited, Woodstock Nation, Haight-Ashbury forever. For the hard left, the Obama presidency is shaping up as a second childhood reversion to the 1960s. Love and peace, brother.

But the American people, even Californians, are not there, brother. Look at the phenomenal ease with which voters, with gas prices skyrocketing, disposed of their opposition to oil exploration and drilling. The vaunted environmental issue's power to bring proud politicians to their knees became, in a flash, a vanishing vapor. Voters wanted to drill now and drill wherever the energy sources are. So much for going green.

How about redistributing the wealth? No, nobody really wants that. As Newt Gingrich pointed out shortly before the election, "By 60 to 20 percent, Americans believe lower taxes, not higher government spending, will best ensure economic recovery, according to a new Fox News/Opinion Dynamics poll. By 86 to 9 percent, Americans believe government should focus on jobs and economic growth over income redistribution, according to a New Models/Winston Group survey. By 71 to 25 percent, Americans believe that if you cut taxes on small business it will create new jobs, according to the New Models/Winston Group poll."

Nobody really supports Democrat enthusiasm for activist judges, for eliminating religion from the public square, or for denying ourselves perfectly good energy sources as we try to protect the environment (within rational limits — *i.e.,* recalling that we still must *live* on

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the planet, a point the anti-human left strongly, although rarely explicitly, disputes). Nobody shares Obama's or other Democrat leaders' refusal to admit that the surge worked. And nobody is willing to risk an Iraq blood bath reminiscent of Pol Pot, though that's what would come if we cut and run as the Reid-Polosi Democrats have urged doing for years. On issues, the Obama Democrats, not "traditional conservative Republicans," have been repudiated time and again.

So why do Democrats win?

But Democrats won the election. Why? The first answer is found in *Republican* leadership so flounderingly moderate that it cannot be trusted to govern significantly differently from Democrats. It is leadership voters cannot trust. The second answer is conservative failure to rally around leaders who in fact are solid conservatives *and* who, in addition to that, can capture the imagination of the people, build coalitions, and win elections. This second reason explains the first. Had winning conservatives been found following Reagan's departure, the GOP would never have fallen under the control of always-ready-to-compromise moderates.

The Palin phenomenon indicates that this problem may be a problem no longer. As her stunning success in helping Saxby Chamblis win in Georgia again proved, she clearly possesses to an extraordinary degree the ability, essential to winning elections, to engage the electorate. But perhaps the best indication that the GOP leadership gap is being filled is the left's apoplectic reaction to Palin, which if anything has grown more strident since Obama's victory. The one sure way to build a fire under these folks is to threaten their power and they know when someone represents such a threat. Their incessant attacks prove that Sarah Palin does exactly that. Other conservative lights also appear on the horizon, Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal, for instance. No one but Palin, however, has so far demonstrated the popular qualities necessary to win. So, for now at least, my money is riding with her.

Building coalitions through issues

The last piece of the puzzle for Republicans is to build winning coalitions by making effective use of their already popular issue positions, positions consistent both with bedrock conservative principle and America's founding ideas. A lot of conservatives, for instance, handled the outbreak of bailout fever poorly. Persuasive arguments may have existed for supporting — as *policy* — at least some sort of initial bailout of the financial institutions. I don't know. I heard no such arguments, but I know a lot of conservatives backed something like the so-called solution that eventually passed. But regardless of the bailouts' standing as policy, as *politics* Republicans had no business touching this fiasco with a ten-foot poll. McCain would probably argue that a time comes to put aside personal and partisan interests and serve the country. But — skipping for now the question of whether the bailouts do, in fact, serve the country — the country can *never* be served by trying to force through policies devoid of popular support. Then it is wiser to return to fight another day. As to the bailouts, almost no part of the GOP coalition supported them and the way they were handled virtually insured that they would insult and/or injure every part of that coalition.

Prop. 8 and the Hispanic/black vote provide an excellent opportunity for effective political use of Republican positions on issues. The opportunity, of course, is to build bridges into a growing community of voters, to divide two base Democrat constituencies, and to illustrate the broad hypocrisy, pandering, and sheer deceit at the core of Democrat politics on family issues (in this regard, Elton John has virtually drawn up, in Ten Easy Lessons, how Republicans should talk about this issue). Conferences, meetings of leaders, get-to-know one another events should be organized to discuss and defend the shared pro-family positions behind the successful passage of this initiative. The bald opportunism, arrogance, and contempt for democratic process behind the courtroom attack on Prop. 8 (leading up to a dramatic state Supreme Court ruling sometime early next year) provide a crucial deadline to lend such an effort both a sense of urgency and a timeline for action. Every element is present to begin the long, necessary process of making permanent, GOP coalition building inroads among pro-family Hispanic and black voters — inroads that would, in time, yield the votes California Republicans must have to become competitive once more in statewide politics. Without those votes, the GOP may well become the irrelevant element the *Chronicle* predicts. But with them, the Democrats stand to lose their stranglehold on Los Angeles County and with it, the state. At that point, dare we think it? Democrats cease to be a national political force.

It could happen. The opportunity is there. Seizing it, however, will require replacing today's timid, self-serving GOP leaders with principled, *popular* conservatives like Sarah Palin and deploying the power of conservative ideas and policy positions wisely to build election-winning coalitions. Conrad's 1989 cartoon may reappear sooner than we think. CPR

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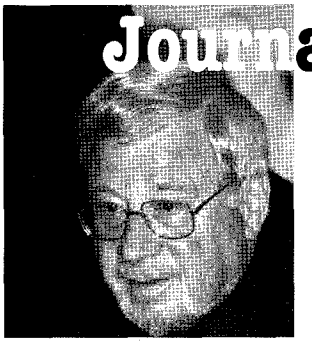
Si Frumkin's Journal



Another mysterious charity puzzle

About two years ago I wrote "The Charity Puzzle," an article on the way Americans donate. I had just finished a fascinating book, *Who Really Cares?*, by Professor Arthur Brooks, that analyzed American charity donors by different religions, political views, age, and income. It showed that liberals gave much less than conservatives, that the religious were much more generous than the secular, that the elderly gave more than the young, and that the rich gave a smaller percentage of their income than those who earned less than $50,000 a year. (If you are interested in knowing more, write me at P.O. Box 1542, Studio City, CA 91614, and I will send you a copy of the article)

Intrigued, I went international, dug through the Internet, and learned that Americans give incomparably more than other nations. We give 1.7 percent of our GDP, more than twice that of the second-place Uinted Kindon with 0.73 percent, followed by other English-speaking countries with 0.7 percent, several Europeans with 0.5 percent, and, in last place, France with just one-tenth of one percent.

There were no really impressive reasons for the differences. I ended my article by remarking, snidely, that it looked as if the stingiest person in the world had to be a rich, liberal, French atheist less than 35 years old.

I didn't think much about this subject in the subsequent two years. I kept on writing my own charity checks, bugged others to support and contribute

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Si Frumkin is publisher and editor of Graffiti for Intellectuals.

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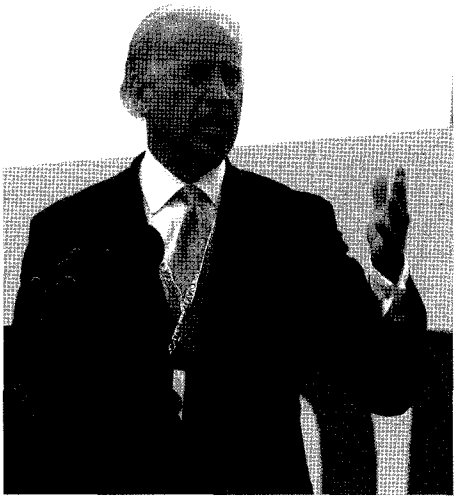

to worthy causes, and felt good about knowing that so many of my fellow Americans were doing the same. Then, as the recently-completed political campaign wound down to a finish and the candidates tried hard to impress the voters, I came across information that shed light on the peculiar character of one of the major figures on the political battlefield. This information is easily available, it has been published here and there with little comment, but as far as I know, the politician in question, Vice-President-elect Joe Biden, has never been asked a direct question about being so extremely tightfisted in giving to charity. He may well have a good explanation. If so, I would like to know what it is.

Here are the facts: the Joe and Jill Biden tax returns for the years 1998 to 2007 show a total income of $2,450,042 and a total of charity contributions of $3,690, about one-eighth of one percent. The Bidens' worst year was 1999: adjusted income of $210,797 and a contribution of $120, less than one-sixteenth of one percent. Their best year was 2007 with an income of $319,853 and donations of $995, slightly more than a quarter of one percent.

Syracuse University's Professor Arthur Brooks, author of the book I mentioned earlier, says the average American household gives about two percent of adjusted gross income a year. For the Biden household this would have meant a contribution of $49,000 for the 10 years. They gave $3,690 — one-fifteenth of the portion an average American family gives!

By comparison, Al Gore, the 2000 Democrat nominee for president, donated $1,727 out of an income of $183,558, about 1 percent. This too was about half of an average American's charity giving, but compared to Biden, Al Gore was generous. He gave more in one year than Biden did in five. I should add that Gore was much less generous when he wasn't running for office. In 1997, he gave $353 from an income of almost $200,000, just one-seventeenth of one percent.

Are all politicians this stingy? Well, some aren't. Tod and Sarah Palin released their tax returns for 2006 ($166,080) and 2007 ($127,869) — a total income of $293,949 for the two years — showing charity contributions of $8,105. This works out to about 2.75 percent and compares to Biden's donation for the same amount of earnings of just $570. There is also Dick Cheney, the current vice-president, whose 10-year tax return showed an average yearly donation of "just" 2.14 percent. At the time it was released, he was roundly castigated by the *New York Times* and other major media outlets for being "meager" and, in the words of a recent *Weekly Standard* editorial, was "raked over the coals for his low level of charitable giving." The coals must have cooled since then. The Democrat vice president-elect does not outrage the *New York Times* for giving at a rate only about one-fifteenth that of the Palins *and* the Cheneys.

To be fair, the Democrat president-elect has far outclassed his soon-to-be vice-president. Barack Obama's charitable contributions for 2006-07 show a 5.8 percent to 6.1 percent donation to charity. But to be even fairer, McCain has given 27.3 to 28.6 percent during the same time: almost six times as much as Obama.

Isn't it puzzling that while the widely-trumpeted compassion of one political party is largely concentrated on giving away other people's money — yours and mine, fellow taxpayers — their cheapskate leaders, with little notice and practically no comment even from their political opponents, much less from the major print and TV media that usually glory in scandalous information, that these leaders get away with disgusting miserliness and disregard for personal charity when it affects their own checkbooks? CPR

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The Decade of the Great Liberal Death Wish

A solvent rather than a precipitate, a sedative rather than a stimulant, a slough rather than a precipice; blurring the edges of truth, the definition of virtue, the shape of beauty; a cracked bell, a mist, a death wish.

Malcolm Muggeridge

Sixteen years ago, to mark America's first leftist presidency, CPR *published this excerpt from Malcolm Muggeridge's "Decade of the Great Liberal Death Wish" (first published in* Esquire, *December 1970). Now, with a solid phalanx of communists about to enter the White House, we reprint it now as still the best primer on the meaning of leftism.*

Searching about in my mind for an appropriate name for the decade which has just begun, I settle for The Decade of The Great Liberal Death Wish. It seems to me that this process of death-wishing, in the guise of liberalism, has been eroding the civilization of the West for a century and more, and is now about to reach its apogee. The liberal mind, effective everywhere, whether in power or in opposition, particularly so during the present period of American world domination, has provided the perfect instrument. Systematically, stage by stage, dismantling our Western way of life, depreciating and deprecating all its values so that the whole social structure is now tumbling down, dethroning its God, undermining all its certainties, and finally mobilizing a Praetorian Guard of ribald students, maintained at the public expense, and ready at the drop of a hat to go into action, not only against their own weak-kneed, bemused academic authorities, but also against any institution or organ for the maintenance of law and order still capable of functioning, especially the police. And all this, wonderfully enough, in the name of the health, wealth, and happiness of all mankind.

Previous civilizations have been overthrown from without by the incursion of barbarian hordes; ours has dreamed up its own dissolution in the minds of its own intellectual elite. It has

Malcolm Muggeridge, borrowing a phrase from St. Augustine, called himself a "vendor of words," a profession he practiced with grace and wit through nearly all of the twentieth century's decades. He died in 1990.

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carefully nurtured its own barbarians — all reared on the best Dr. Spock lines, sent to progressive schools and colleges, fitted with contraceptives or fed birth pills at puberty, mixing D. H. Lawrence with their Coca-Cola, and imbibing the headier stuff (Marcuse, Chairman Mao, Malcolm X) in evening libations of hot chocolate. Not bolshevism, which Stalin liquidated along with all the old Bolsheviks; not nazism, which perished with Hitler in his Berlin bunker; not fascism, which was left hanging upside down, along with Mussolini and his mistress, from a lamppost — none of these, history will record, was responsible for bringing down the darkness on our civilization, but liberalism. A solvent rather than a precipitate, a sedative rather than a stimulant, a slough rather than a precipice; blurring the edges of truth, the definition of virtue, the shape of beauty; a cracked bell, a mist, a death wish.

I was fortunate enough myself, while still in my late twenties, to be presented with a demonstration of the great liberal death wish at work, so manifest, so incontestable in its implications, and, at the same time, so hilariously funny, that I have never subsequently felt the smallest doubt that here lay the key to the tragicomedy of our time. It happened in Moscow, in the Autumn of 1932 and Spring of 1933, when I was working there as correspondent for the, then, *Manchester Guardian.* In those days, Moscow was the Mecca for every liberal mind, whatever its particular complexion. They flocked there in an unending procession, from the great ones like Shaw and Gide and Barbusse and Julian Huxley and Harold Laski and the Webbs, down to poor little teachers, crazed clergymen and millionaires, and driveling dons; all utterly convinced that, under the aegis of the great Stalin, a new dawn was breaking in which the human race would at last be united in liberty, equality, and fraternity forevermore.

Stalin himself, to do him justice, never troubled to hide his contempt for them and everything they stood for, and mercilessly suppressed any like tendencies among his own people. This, however, in no wise deterred them. They were prepared to believe anything, however preposterous; to overlook anything, however villainous; to approve anything, however obscurantist and brutally authoritarian, in order to be able to preserve intact the confident expectation that one of the most thoroughgoing, ruthless, and bloody tyrannies ever to exist on earth could be relied on to champion human freedom, the brotherhood of man, and all the other good liberal causes to which they had dedicated their lives. It is true that many of them subsequently retracted; that incidents like the Stalinist purges, the Nazi-Soviet Pact, the debunking of Stalin at the Twentieth Party Congress, the Hungarian and Czech risings, each caused a certain leakage among liberal well-wishers. Yet when the dust settles, the same old bias is clearly discernible. It is an addiction, like alcoholism, to which the liberal mind is intrinsically susceptible — to grovel before any Beelzebub who claims, however implausibly, to be a prince of liberals.

Why? After all, the individuals concerned are ostensibly the shining lights of the Western world; scholars, philosophers, artists, scientists, and the like; the favored children of a troubled time. Held in respect as being sages who know all the answers; sought after by governments and international agencies; holding forth in the press and on the air. The glory of faculties and campuses; beating a path between Harvard and Princeton, and Washington, D.C.; swarming like migrant birds from the London School of Economics, Oxford, and Cambridge into Whitehall. Yet I have seen their prototypes — and I can never forget it — in the role of credulous buffoons capable of being taken in by grotesquely obvious deceptions. Swallowing unquestioningly statistics and other purported data whose falsity was immediately evident to the meanest intelligence. Full of idiot delight when Stalin or one of his henchmen yet again denounced the corrupt, cowardly intelligentsia of the capitalist West — *viz.,* themselves. I detect in their like today the same impulse. They pass on from one to another, like a torch held upside down, the same death wish. Editors come and go, newspapers decline and fold, Labour Governments form and unform; after Roosevelt, Truman and then Eisenhower; after Kennedy, Johnson and then Nixon; but the great liberal death wish goes marching on.

In those far-off days in Moscow it was possible to discuss matters like distinguished vis-

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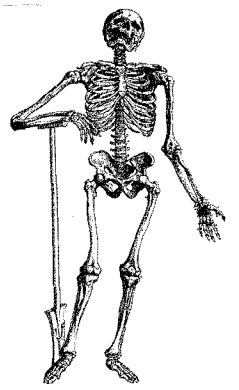
iting intellectuals with officials of the Press Department of the Soviet Foreign Office, with whom, of course, we foreign journalists were in constant contact. Most of them were Russian Jews who had lived abroad before the Revolution. Unlike the usual sort of wooden-faced Soviet functionary, they had a sense of humor and a taste for irony. One and all, as it happened, were fated to be shot when, later on, Stalin swung the regime back to traditional Russian anti-Semitism. Yes, of course, they said, people like Shaw and the Webbs were natural stool pigeons, historically destined to play a Judas part and betray — admittedly, rather out of vanity than cupidity — their own phony liberal principles to a triumphant Marxist revolutionary movement in whose eyes they were, and must always be, anathema. Meanwhile, they had their usefulness, if only in reassuring the Soviet authorities that, whatever they might feel bound to do in the way of terrorism and dictatorial practices, they never need worry their heads about hostile reactions in enlightened circles and newspapers in the West. The Foreign Office men told me that they even on occasion amused themselves by seeing how far they could go in gulling distinguished visitors, fabricating production statistics and Stakhanovite feats at the factory bench which could not possibly be true. However tall their stories, they were invariably believed, and often quoted in learned publications abroad; the credulity of their visitors was, it seemed, fathomless.

It is an addiction, like alcoholism, to which the liberal mind is intrinsically susceptible — to grovel before any Beelzebub who claims to be a prince of liberals.

To the fevered mind of a Senator Joe McCarthy, or the more sedate, but still irascible one of a Vice-President Spiro Agnew; even to so erudite and responsible a citizen as Enoch Powell, it all smells unmistakably of conspiracy.



How otherwise to account for the fact that the liberal mind, like deathwatch beetles, seems to be active in all the rafters and foundations of the State? So, they imagine suborned men, and hurl wild accusations and denunciations. Ah, if only it were a conspiracy! How easy, then, to apprehend the principals and subdue their dupes! But a death wish subconsciously entertained in newspaper offices and college faculties, in television and radio studios, in churches of all denominations, wherever two or more illuminati are gathered together — that is something else. To suppress a death wish it is necessary to proclaim a corresponding life wish — which is just what a Senator McCarthy, a Vice-President Agnew, an Enoch Powell cannot do; with the result that their wild accusations only serve to advance the very thing they believe they are attacking. They remind me of an old evangelical missionary I came across years ago in South India when I was living there. This good man had got in the way of appearing each year at a local Hindu festival and denouncing the god Shiva, before whom devotees were prostrating themselves. At first he was stoned, then just cursed and insulted, and finally taken for granted. When the time came for him to retire, the organizers of the festival petitioned his missionary society to send a replacement. He had become part of the show.

Recalling, in the light of these experiences, my time as an editorial writer on the *Guardian* before going to Moscow, I realized that there, in that great citadel of liberalism, we were engaged in spelling out the essential terms of the great liberal death wish. All our protestations and prognostications were governed by its exigencies. Thus, in our editorials, it was a basic principle that our enemies were always in the right and our friends in the wrong. If, for instance, a British soldier was killed anywhere, it was an unfortunate consequence of the brutal and crooked policies the poor fellow was required to

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implement; if, on the other hand, a British soldier killed someone, the victim was automatically a blessed martyr, to be mourned, and possibly made the subject of a demonstration, by all decent liberal people. Likewise, any Indians who were misguided enough to be our friends became thereby worthless and despicable figures in our eyes — with the exception, curiously enough, of the Aga Khan, who really was worthless. The repute in which he was held, however, was not due to any appreciation of his political views, but rather to his eminence on the racetrack; something so esteemed by the English that it covers even being on our side. Other Indians, like Nehru, who specialized in holding us up to hatred and contempt, were treated with the utmost consideration. I note that a similar role has come to be adopted by the *New York Times,* the *Washington Post,* and other high-toned American newspapers, as well as by the more eminent radio and television commentators, who pour out their wrath and derision on any poor sucker who is fool enough to support the American side anywhere, but are quick to offer sympathetic treatment to a Castro, a Ho Chi Minh, a Che Guevara, none of whom can be regarded as exactly Americanophile. As far as the death wish or Gaderene stakes are concerned, I calculate that America is running a shade behind us, but is going hard in the direction of the same cliff.

I ask myself how this predilection for enemies and distaste for friends came to pass in what many of us have been brought up to regard as the most cultivated and enlightened minds of our time. Why it has seemed so obvious to them that whatever commends itself to our well-wishers must be despicable, and whatever serves the interests of our ill-wishers must be beneficial. Why, for instance, there should be so unanimous a feeling in such circles in the United States that the discrediting of American policies and the defeat of American arms in Vietnam represents a progressive aspiration, and the converse a reactionary one. Why, in a world full of oppressive regimes and terrorist practices, in England the venom and fury of the liberal mind should pick on the white South Africans with particular spleen when their oligarchic rule only differs from that of a dozen others — Tito's, Franco's, Castro's, etc., etc. — in that they happen to be anxious to be on good terms with the English.

What but a death wish could bring about so complete a reversal of all the normal worldly considerations of good sense, self-interest, and a desire to survive? I remember reading in Taine's *Origines de la France Contemporaine* of how, shortly before the Revolution, a party of affluent liberal intellectuals were discussing over their after-dinner cognac all the wonderful things that were going to happen when the Bourbon regime was abolished, and freedom *à la* Voltaire and Jean-Jacques Rousseau reigned supreme. One of the guests, hitherto silent, suddenly spoke up. Yes, he said, the Bourbon regime would indeed be overthrown, and in the process — pointing round — you and you and you will be carried screaming to the guillotine; you and you and you go into penurious exile, and — now pointing in the direction of some of the elegant ladies present — you and you and you hawk your bodies round from *sansculotte* to *sansculotte.* There was a moment of silence while this, as it turned out, all too exact prophesy sank in, and then the previous conversation was resumed. I know several fashionable and affluent households in London and Washington and Paris where similar conversations take place, and where similarly exact prophesies might be made, without, as on the occasion Taine so appositely described, having the slightest impact.

It would seem clear, then, that the great liberal death wish arises out of a historical, or maybe biological, necessity, rather than out of any rational, or even irrational, considerations. Civilizations, like classes and families and regimes, degenerate, and so must be wound up. Just as the great-grandson of some famous ducal figure or billionaire may have thrust upon him the disagreeable fate of ending his line, and, drooling and dissolute, duly ends it, so the liberal mind, likewise drooling and dissolute, has been entrusted with the historic task of bringing to an end what we are supposed to be defending with might and main — I mean what we still like to call our free way of life and the free institutions that have sustained it. On such a basis, all the views, attitudes, values, and recommendations of the liberal mind today make complete sense.

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Going back to my Moscow experience, those eminent intellectuals abasing themselves before Stalin, and so fatuously accepting his bona fides as a lover of human freedom and enlightenment, were simply fulfilling a manifest destiny to abolish themselves, their culture, and their world.

I have a recurrent nightmare that somehow or other a lot of contemporary pabulum — video tape of television programs with accompanying advertisements, news footage, copies of newspapers and magazines, stereo tapes of pop groups and other cacophonies, best-selling novels, films, and other such material — gets preserved, like the Dead Sea Scrolls, in some remote salt cave. Then, some centuries, or maybe millennia, later, when our civilization will long since have joined all the others that once were, and now can only be patiently reconstructed out of dusty ruins, incomprehensible hieroglyphics, and other residuary relics, archaeologists discover the cave, and set about sorting out its contents and trying to deduce from them what we were like and how we lived. (This is assuming, of course, that we do not, in the process of working out the great liberal death wish, blow ourselves and our earth to smithereens — a large assumption.)

The liberal mind, drooling and dissolute, has been entrusted with the historic task of bringing to an end what we still like to call our free way of life.

What will they make of us? I wonder. Materially, so rich and so powerful; spiritually, so impoverished and fear-ridden. Having made such remarkable inroads into the secrets of nature; beginning to explore, and perhaps to colonize, the universe itself; developing the means to produce in more or less unlimited quantities everything we could possibly need or desire, and to transmit swifter than light every thought, smile, or word that could possibly delight, entertain, or instruct us. Disposing of treasure beyond calculation, opening up possibilities beyond conception. Yet haunted and obsessed by the fear that we are too numerous; that soon, as our numbers go on increasing, there will be no room or food for us. On the one hand, a neurotic passion to increase consumption, sustained by every sort of imbecile persuasion; on the other, ever-increasing hunger and penury among the so-called backward or underdeveloped peoples. Never, our archaeologists will surely conclude, was any generation of men intent upon the pursuit of happiness more advantageously placed to attain it, who yet, with seeming deliberation, took the opposite course — toward chaos, not order; toward breakdown, not stability; toward death, destruction, and darkness, not life, creativity, and light. An ascent that ran downhill; plenty that turned into a wasteland: a cornucopia whose abundance made hungry; a death wish inexorably unfolding.

Searching about in their minds for some explanation of this pursuit of happiness that became a death wish, the archaeologists, it seems to me, would be bound to hit upon the doctrine of progress: probably the most ludicrous, certainly the most deleterious, fancy ever to take possession of the human heart; the liberal mind's basic dogma. The notion that human beings, *as individuals,* must necessarily get better and better is even now considered by most people to be untenable in the light of their indubitably outrageous behavior toward one another; but the equivalent *collective* concept — that their social circumstances and conduct must necessarily improve — has come to seem almost axiomatic. On this basis, all change represents progress, and is therefore good; to change anything is, *per se,* to improve or reform it.

For instance, to dilute the marriage tie to the point that it no longer impedes virtually unrestrained promiscuity, or provides the possibility of a stable home to bring up children in, is a reform; to oppose this, reactionary. Likewise, to abolish all restrictions on what may be pub-

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lished, or publicly shown as entertainment, is a reform, even though it opens the way for an avalanche of pornography, and gives full freedom to operate to the sinister individuals and interests engaging in this unsavory trade. Again, the legalization of abortion is a reform as, we may be sure, will be claimed in due course for legalization of euthanasia. In Germany, under the Nazi regime — a decidedly liberal one in this field — sterilization of the allegedly unfit was practiced with a zeal and expedition that must be the envy of our eugenists, forced, as they are, to adopt such paltry devices as offering transistor radio sets to putative Indian sterilees. The Nazis were able, too, to dispose painlessly and expeditiously of unproductive citizens — what the French, with their usual brutal realism, call "useless mouths" — without any questions being asked. All this Nazi-sponsored progress was summarily interrupted by Germany's military defeat in 1945, but after a decent interval has been resumed in the victor countries.

It was, of course, Darwin's theory of natural selection which first popularized the notion that Man and his environment are involved in an endless and automatic process of improvement. Who can measure the consequences of this naive assumption? What secret subversive organization, endowed with unlimited funds and resources, could hope to achieve a thousandth part of what it achieved in the way of discrediting the then prevailing moral values and assumptions, putting in their place nothing more than vague, sentimental hopes of collective human betterment, and the liberal mind to entertain them? It is interesting to reflect that now, in the light of all that has happened, the early obscurantist opponents of Darwinian evolution seem vastly more sagacious and farseeing than its early excited champions. There must be quite a number today who, like myself, would rather go down to history even as a puffing, portentous Bishop Wilberforce than, say, a Herbert Spencer, or a poor, squeaky H.G. Wells, ardent evolutionist and disciple of Huxley, with his vision of an earthly paradise achieved through science and technology; those twin monsters which have laid waste a whole world, polluting its seas and rivers and lakes with poisons, infecting its very earth and all its creatures, reaching into Man's mind and inner consciousness to control and condition him, at the same time entrusting to irresponsible, irresolute human hands the instruments of universal destruction. It must be added that, confronted with this prospect when, at the very end of his life, the first nuclear explosion was announced, Wells turned his face to the wall, letting off in *Mind at the End of its Tether* one last, despairing, whimpering cry which unsaid everything he had ever thought or hoped. Belatedly, he understood that what he had followed as a lifeforce was, in point of fact, a death wish, into which he was glad to sink the little that remained of his own life in the confident expectation of total and final obliteration.

The enthronement of the gospel of progress necessarily required the final discrediting of the gospel of Christ, and the destruction of the whole edifice of ethics, law, culture, human relationships and human behavior constructed upon it. Our civilization, after all, began with Christianity, not the theory of evolution, and, we may be sure, will perish with it, too — if it has not already. Jesus of Nazareth was its founding father, not Charles Darwin; it was Paul of Tarsus who first carried its message to Europe, not Henry Ford, or even Hugh Hefner. Jesus, by dying on the Cross, abolished death-wishing; dying became thenceforth life's glory and fulfillment. So, when Jesus called on His followers to die in order to live, He created a tidal wave of joy and hope on which they have ridden for two thousand years. The gospel of progress represents the exact antithesis. It plays the Crucifixion backward: in the beginning was the flesh, and the flesh became Word. In the light of this Logos in reverse, the quest for hope is the ultimate hopelessness; the pursuit of happiness, the certitude of despair; the lust for life, the embrace of death.

The liberal assault on Christianity has been undertaken with a fury and fervor which today, when the battle seems to have been conclusively won, is difficult to comprehend. I well remember my surprise, in a television encounter with Bertrand Russell, at discovering in him an almost demented hatred of Christ and Christianity, to which he attributed all the horrors and misfortunes mankind has had to endure since the fall of the Roman Empire. As I at-

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tempted to confute this view, I found myself watching with fascination a red flush which rose steadily up his thin stringy neck and spread to his face. The receding chin, the pasty flesh, the simian features struck me then as suggestive of a physical degeneracy (doubtless to be expected in view of his family history) matching the moral degeneracy he had done so much to promote. It was a cruel, and doubtless unfair, light in which to see him; a product, I daresay, of the passionate and physically agonizing conflict in which I found myself involved. At the time, however, the impression was particularly vivid and convincing, and abides with me still.

The script of this strange encounter is still extant, and reveals the philosopher in a most unphilosophic mood; roaring and bellowing like any atheist orator at Hyde Park Corner. In the light of it, I derived a lot of quiet amusement from the tributes paid to Russell by eminent churchmen when he died. To the best of my knowledge, there was not one single ecclesiastical or clerical voice raised to point out that the great influence Russell undoubtedly exerted was inimical to every Christian moral assumption and standard of Christian behavior. It is rather as though one were to find in the literature of the Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals a panegyric to bullfighting or fox hunting.

If the purpose of life is, indeed, to pursue happiness here and now, on this earth, then, clearly, it can only be realized in terms of what this earth provides — that is, of goods and toys, of egotistic success or celebrity, of diversions like speed and travel and narcotic fantasies; above all, of sexual pleasure and excitement which alone offers an additional illusory sense of transcendental satisfaction notably lacking in another Cadillac, a trip to Tibet or to the moon, or a press of autograph hunters. Sex is the only mysticism materialism offers, and so to sex the pursuers of happiness address themselves with an avidity and dedication seldom, if ever, surpassed. Who among posterity will ever be able to reconstruct the resultant scene? Who for that matter can convey it today? The vast, obsessive outpouring of erotica in every shape and form; in book and film and play and entertainment, in body and word and deed, to that there is no escape for anyone. The lame and the halt, the doddering and the infirm, equally called upon to squeeze out of their frail flesh the requisite response. It is the flesh that quickeneth, the spirit profiteth nothing; *copulo ergo sum,* I screw, therefore I am — the new version of Descartes' famous axiom. All possible impediments swept away; no moral taboos, no legal ones, either. An orgasm a day, however procured, keeps the doctor away. Pornography, like Guinness, is good for us, as numerous learned doctors and professors have been at great pains to establish.

For instance, a Dr. O. Elthammer of the Stockholm Child Psychiatric Department, who, I read in a letter to the *New Statesman* — that faithful chronicler of the liberal mind through every twist and turn and tergiversation for half a century past — has "proved conclusively" that pornography does not have a corrupting effect, by showing to some children between the ages of 11 and 18 a film of a woman being raped by a group of intoxicated louts and then forced to have intercourse with a dog. "None of the children," the doctor triumphantly concluded, "was frightened during or after the film, but a proportion of the older girls did admit to being shocked," while two adults also present "needed psychological treatment for a month afterward." One idly wonders what happened to the dog.

I see the great liberal death wish driving through the years ahead in triple harness with the gospel of progress and the pursuit of happiness. These our three Horsemen of the Apocalypse — progress, happiness, death. Gorging, left hungry; sedated, left restless; telling all, hiding all; in flesh united, forever separate. So we press on through the valley of abundance that leads to the wasteland of satiety, passing through the gardens of fantasy; seeking happiness ever more ardently, and finding death ever more surely. CPR

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HISTORY

What *really* led to the Crusades?

Part 4

BY JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

Few topics have become as confused, as clouded over with historical misinformation, or as conducive of a misplaced "say nothing about it; I already know more than I want to" complacency of mind than the Crusades — the series of military expeditions launched from Europe against Moslem-Turkish forces in the East commencing in 1095 and continuing through the following two centuries. (Which should, for historic completeness, also include the successful defense of Malta in 1565 against Turkish invaders; the naval defeat of the Turks in 1571 at the Battle of Lepanto; and the final elimination of the Turkish threat to Europe in 1683 before the gates of Vienna.)

A clear picture of this vast conflict requires first that it be seen in its full historical context. To help supply that context, CPR *here publishes the fourth installment in this series: excerpts from a set of brilliant lectures "On the History of the Turks," delivered to English audiences in 1853 by John Henry Cardinal Newman. Newman gave his talks, as he put it, "when we [the English people] are on the point of undertaking a great war in behalf of the Turks" — in the Crimea — something Newman saw as requiring examination, given the Turks' historic role* vis à vis *the West.* CPR *here taps these lectures' larger value in placing the Crusades in the context of Western history.*
— editor

IT OFTEN happens in the history of states and races, in which there is found first a rise and then a decline, that the greatest glories take place just then when the reverse is beginning or begun. Thus, for instance, in the history of the Ottoman Turks, to which I have not yet come, Soliman the Magnificent is at once the last and greatest of a series of great Sultans. So was it as regards the house of Seljuk *[See:* "What really led to the Crusades?" Part 3, *CPR,* Sept./Oct. 2008*]*. Malek Shah, the son of Alp Arslan, the third sovereign, in whom its glories ended, is represented to us in history in colours so bright and perfect, that it is difficult to believe we are not reading the account of some mythical personage. He came to the throne at the early age of seventeen; he was well-shaped, handsome, polished both in manners and in mind; wise and courageous, pious and sincere. He engaged himself even more in the consolidation of his empire than in its extension. He reformed abuses; he reduced the taxes; he repaired the high roads, bridges, and canals; he built an imperial mosque at Bagdad; he

John Henry Newman, English divine, philosopher, man of letters, and leader of the Tractarian Movement, lived from 1801 to 1890.

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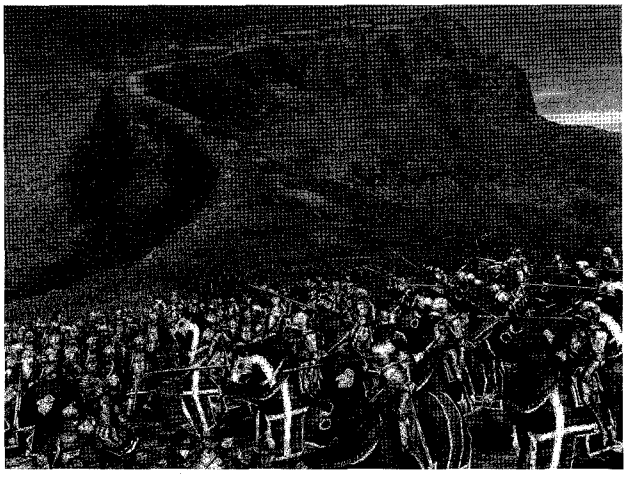
founded and nobly endowed a college. He patronised learning and poetry, and he reformed the calendar. He provided marts for commerce; he upheld the pure administration of justice, and protected the helpless and the innocent. He established wells and cisterns in great numbers along the road of pilgrimage to Mecca; he fed the pilgrims, and distributed immense sums among the poor.

He was in every respect a great prince; he extended his conquests across Sogdiana to the very borders of China. He subdued by his lieutenants Syria and the Holy Land, and took Jerusalem. He is said to have traveled round his vast dominions twelve times. So potent was he, that he actually gave away kingdoms, and had for feudatories great princes. He gave to his cousin his territories in Asia Minor, and planted him over against Constantinople, as an earnest of future conquests; and he may be said to have allotted to the Turcomans, finally, the fair regions of Western Asia, over which they roam to this day.

All human greatness has its term; the more brilliant was this great Sultan's rise, the more sudden was his extinction; and the earlier he came to his power, the earlier did he lose it. He had reigned twenty years, and was but thirty-seven years old, when he was lifted up with pride and came to his end. He disgraced and abandoned to an assassin his faithful vizir, at the age of ninety-three, who for thirty years had been the servant and benefactor of the house of Seljuk. After obtaining from the Caliph the peculiar and almost incommunicable title of "the commander of the faithful," unsatisfied still, he wished to fix his own throne in Bagdad, and to deprive his impotent superior of his few remaining honors. He demanded the hand of the daughter of the Greek Emperor, a Christian, in marriage. A few days, and he was no more; he had gone out hunting, and returned indisposed; a vein was opened, and the blood would not flow. A burning fever took him off, only eighteen days after the murder of his vizir, and less than ten before the day when the Caliph was to have been removed from Bagdad.

Whoso shall strike against His cornerstone shall be broken

Such is human greatness at the best, even were it ever so innocent; but as to this poor Sultan, there is another aspect even of his glorious deeds. If I have seemed here or elsewhere in these Lectures to speak of him or his with interest or admiration, only take me, Gentlemen, as giving the external view of the Turkish history, and that as introductory to the determination of its true significance. Historians and poets may celebrate the exploits of Malek; but what were they in the sight of Him who has said that whoso shall strike against His corner-stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, shall be ground to powder? Looking at this Sultan's deeds as mere exhibitions of human power, they were brilliant and marvelous; but there was another judgment of them formed in the West, and other feelings than admiration roused by them in the faith and the chivalry of Christendom. Especially was there one, the divinely appointed shepherd of the poor of Christ, the anxious steward of His Church, who from his high and ancient watch tower, in the fullness of apostolic charity, surveyed narrowly what was going on at thousands of miles from him, and with prophetic eye looked into the future age; and scarcely had that enemy, who was in the event so heavily to smite the Christian world, shown himself, when he gave warning of the danger, and prepared himself with measures for averting it. Scarcely had the Turk touched the shores of the Mediterranean and the Archipelago, when the pope detected and denounced him before all Europe. The heroic pontiff, St. Gregory the Seventh, was then upon the throne of the apostle; and though he was engaged in one of the severest conflicts which pope has ever sustained, not only against the secular power, but against bad bishops and priests, yet at a time when his very life was not his own, and present responsibilities so urged him, that one would fancy he had time for no other thought, Gregory was able to turn his mind to the consideration of a contingent danger in the almost fabulous East. In a letter written during the reign of Malek Shah, he suggested the idea of a crusade against the misbeliever, which later popes carried out. He assures the emperor of Germany, whom he was addressing, that he had 50,000 troops ready for the holy war, whom he would fain have led in person. This was in the year 1074.



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A Seljuk Turk

In truth, the most melancholy accounts were brought to Europe of the state of things in the Holy Land. A rude Turcoman ruled in Jerusalem; his people insulted there the clergy of every profession; they dragged the patriarch by the hair along the pavement, and cast him into a dungeon, in hopes of a ransom; and disturbed from time to time the Latin Mass and office in the Church of the Resurrection. As to the pilgrims, Asia Minor, the country through which they had to travel in an age when the sea was not yet safe to the voyager, was a scene of foreign incursion and internal distraction. They arrived at Jerusalem exhausted by their sufferings, and sometimes terminated them by death, before they were permitted to kiss the Holy Sepulchre.

'I will suck that blood which is so ruddy in your throat ....'

Outrages such as these were of frequent occurrence, and one was very like another. However, I think it worthwhile to set before you, Gentlemen, the circumstances of one of them in detail, that you may be able to form some ideas of the state both of Asia Minor and of a Christian pilgrimage, under the dominion of the Turks. You may recollect, then, that Alp Arslan, the second Seljukian Sultan, invaded Asia Minor, and made prisoner the Greek Emperor. This Sultan came to the throne in 1062, and appears to have begun his warlike operations immediately. The next year, or the next but one, a body of pilgrims, to the number of 7,000, were pursuing their peaceful way to Jerusalem, by a route which at that time lay entirely through countries professing Christianity [See: *Baronius, Gibbon].* The pious company was headed by the Archbishop of Mentz, the Bishops of Utrecht, Bamberg, and Ratisbon, and, among others, by a party of Norman soldiers and clerks, belonging to the household of William Duke of Normandy, who made himself, very soon afterwards, our William the Conqueror. Among these clerks was the celebrated Benedictine Monk Ingulphus, William's secretary, afterwards Abbot of Croyland in Lincolnshire, being at that time a little more than thirty years of age. They passed through Germany and Hungary to Constantinople, and thence by the southern coast of Asia Minor or Anatolia, to Syria and Palestine. When they got on the confines of Asia Minor towards Cilicia, they fell in with the savage Turcomans, who were attracted by the treasure, which these noble persons and wealthy churchmen had brought with them for pious purposes and imprudently displayed. Ingulphus's words are few, but so graphic that I require an apology for using them. He says then, they were "exenterated" or "cleaned out of the immense sums of money they carried with them, together with the loss of many lives."

A CONTEMPORARY HISTORIAN gives us fuller particulars of the adventure, and he too appears to have been a party to the expedition *[Vid. Cave's Hist. Litterar. in nom. Lambertus].* It seems the prelates celebrated the rites of the Church with great magnificence, as they went along, and traveled with a pomp which became great dignitaries. The Turcomans in consequence set on them, overwhelmed them, stripped them to the skin, and left the Bishop of Utrecht disabled and half dead upon the field. The poor sufferers effected their retreat to a village, where they fortified an enclosure and took possession of a building which stood within it. Here they defended themselves courageously for as many as three days, though they are said to have had nothing to eat. At the end of that time they expressed a wish to surrender themselves to the enemy, and admitted eighteen of the barbarian leaders into their place of strength, with a view of negotiating the terms. The Bishop of Bamberg, who is said to have had a striking presence, acted for the Christians, and bargained for nothing more than their lives. The savage Turcoman, who was the speaker on the other side, attracted by his appearance, unrolled his turban, and threw it round the Bishop's neck, crying out: "You and all of you are mine." The Bishop made answer by an interpreter: "What will you do to me?" The savage shrieked out some unintelligible words, which, being explained to the Bishop, ran thus: "I will suck that blood which is so ruddy in your throat, and then I will hang you up like a dog at your

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gate." "Upon which," says the historian, "the Bishop, who had the modesty of a gentleman, and was of a grave disposition, not bearing the insult, dashed his fist into the Turcoman's face with such vigor as to fell him to the ground, crying out that the profane wretch should rather be the sufferer, for laying his unclean hands upon a priest."

This was the signal for an exploit so bold, that it seemed, if I may so express myself, like a particular inspiration. The Christians, unarmed as they were, started up, and though, as I have observed, they may be said to have scarcely tasted food for three days, rushed upon the eighteen Turcomans, bound their arms behind their backs, and showing them in this condition to their own troops who surrounded the house, protested that they would instantly put them all to death, unless they themselves were let go. It is difficult to see how this complication would have ended, in which neither side were in a condition either to recede or to advance, had not a third party interfered with a considerable force in the person of the military governor, himself a pagan, of a neighboring city [Gibbon makes this the Fatimite governor of some town in Galilee, laying the scene in Palestine. The name Capernaum is doubtfully mentioned in the history, but the occurrence is said to have taken place on the borders of Lycia. Anyhow, there were Turcomans in Palestine. Part of the account in the text is taken from Marianus Scotus.]; and though, as our historian says, the Christians found it difficult to understand how Satan could cast out Satan, so it was, that they found themselves at liberty and their enemies marched off to punishment, on the payment of a sum of money to their deliverers. I need not pursue the history of these pilgrims further than to say, that, of 7,000 who set out, only 2,000 returned to Europe.

Much less am I led to enter into the history of the Crusades which followed. How the Holy See, twenty years after St. Gregory, effected that which St. Gregory attempted without result; how, along the very way which the pilgrims I have described journeyed, 100,000 men at length appeared cased in complete armor and on horseback; how they drove the Turk from Nicaea over against Constantinople, where he had fixed his imperial city, to the farther borders of Asia Minor; how, after defeating him in a pitched battle at Dorylaeum, they went on and took Antioch, and then at length, after a long pilgrimage of three years, made conquest of Jerusalem itself, I need not here relate.

To one point only is it to our present purpose to direct attention. It is commonly said that the Crusades failed in their object; that they were nothing else but a lavish expenditure of men and treasure; and that the possession of the Holy Places by the Turks to this day is a proof of it. Now I will not enter here into a very intricate controversy; this only will I say, that, if the tribes of the desert, under the leadership of the house of Seljuk, turned their faces to the West in the middle of the eleventh century; if in forty years they had advanced from Khorasan to Jerusalem and the neighborhood of Constantinople; and if in consequence they were threatening Europe and Christianity; and if, for that reason, it was a great object to drive them back or break them to pieces; if it were a worthy object of the Crusades to rescue Europe from this peril and to reassure the anxious minds of Christian multitudes; — then were the Crusades no failure in their issue, for this object was fully accomplished.

The Seljukian Turks *were* hurled back upon the East, and then broken up, by the hosts of the Crusaders [Newman here notes that: "I should observe that the Turks were driven out of Jerusalem by the Fatimites of Egypt, two years before the Crusaders appeared." According to "The Free Dictionary by Farlex" (at *http://encyclopedia.farlex.com/Fatimites),* the Fatimites were a "Dynasty of Muslim Shiite caliphs founded in 909 by Obaidallah, who claimed to be a descendant of Fatima (the prophet Muhammad's daughter) and her husband Ali, in North Africa. In 969 the Fatimids conquered Egypt, and the dynasty continued until overthrown by Saladin in 1171." Saladin was a Kurd].

THE LIEUTENANT of Malek Shah, who had been established as Sultan of Roum (as Asia Minor was called by the Turks), was driven to an obscure town, where his dynasty lasted, indeed, but gradually dwindled away. A similar fate attended the house of Seljuk in other parts of the Empire, and internal quarrels increased and perpetuated its weakness. Sudden as was its rise, as sudden was its fall; till the terrible Genghis, descending on the Turkish dynasties, like an avalanche, cooperated effectually with the Crusaders and finished their work; and if Jerusalem was not protected from other enemies, at least Constantinople was saved, and Europe was placed in security, for three hundred years

Pope St. Gregory the Great

[At this point, Newman further noted that: "I am pleased

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Statue of Godefroy de Bouillon, King of Jerusalem, a leader of the First Crusade.

to see that Mr. Sharon Turner takes the same view strongly *(England in Middle Ages,* i. 9). Also Mr. Francis Newman (in his "Lectures at Manchester," 1846) says "The See of Rome had not forgotten, if Europe had, *how deadly and dangerous a war Charles Martel and the Franks had had to wage against the Moors from Spain. [emphasis added — editor]* A new and redoubtable nation, the Seljuk Turks, had now appeared on the confines of Europe, as a fresh champion of the Mohammedan Creed; and it is not attributing too much foresight or too sagacious policy to the Court of Rome, to believe that they wished to stop and put down the Turkish power before it should come too near. Be this as it may, such was the result. The might of the Seljukians was crippled on the plains of Palestine, and did not ultimately reach Europe ... A large portion of Christendom, which disowned the religious pretensions of Rome, was afterwards subdued by another Turkish tribe, the Ottomans or Osmanlis; but Romish Christendom remained untouched: Poland, Germany, and Hungary, saved her from the later Turks, even during the schism of the Reformation, as the Franks had saved her from the Moors. On the whole, it would seem that to the Romish Church we have been largely indebted for that union between European nations, without which Mohammedanism might perhaps not have been repelled. I state this as probable, not at all as certain."

Populousness, fire, resources, fanaticism

I said earlier that we are bound to judge of persons and events in history, not by their outward appearance, but by their inward significance. In speaking of the Turks, we may for a moment yield to the romance that attends on their name and their actions, as we may admire the beauty of some beast of prey; but, as it would be idle and puerile to praise its shape or skin, and form no further judgment upon it, so in like manner it is unreal and unphilosophical to interest ourselves in the mere adventures and successes of the Turks, without going on to view them in their moral aspect also. No race casts so broad and dark a shadow on the page of ecclesiastical history, and leaves so painful an impression on the minds of the reader, as the Turkish. The fierce Goths and Vandals, and then again the Lombards, were converted to Catholicism. The Franks yielded to the voice of St. Remigius, and Clovis, their leader, became the eldest son of the Church. The Anglo-Saxons gave up their idols at the preaching of St. Augustine and his companions. The German tribes acknowledged Christ amid their forests, though they martyred St. Boniface and other English and Irish missionaries who came to them. The Magyars in Hungary were led to faith through loyalty to their temporal monarch, their royal missioner St. Stephen. The heathen Danes reappear as the chivalrous Normans, the haughty but true sons and vassals of St. Peter. The Saracens even, who gave birth to an imposture, withered away at the end of 300 or 400 years, and had not the power, though they had the will, to persevere in their enmity to the Cross. The Tartars had both the will and the power, but they were far off from Christendom, or they came down in ephemeral outbreaks, which were rather those of freebooters than of persecutors, or they directed their fury as often against the enemies of the Church as against her children.

BUT THE unhappy race, of whom I am speaking, from the first moment they appear in the history of Christendom, are its unmitigated, its obstinate, its consistent foes. They are inexhaustible in numbers, pouring down upon the South and West, and taking one and the same terrible mold of misbelief as they successively descend. They have the populousness of the North, with the fire of the South; the resources of Tartars, with the fanaticism of Saracens. And when their strength declines, and age steals upon them, there is no softening, no misgiving; they die and make no sign. In the words of the Wise Man, "Being born, they forthwith ceased to be; and have been able to show no mark of virtue, but are consumed in wickedness." God's judgments, God's mercies, are inscrutable; one nation is taken, another is left. It is a mystery; but the fact stands; since the year 1048 the Turks have been the great Antichrist among the races of men.

I say since this date, because then it was that Togrul Beg finally opened the gates of the North to those descents, which had taken place indeed at intervals before, but then became the habit of centuries. In vain was the power of his dynasty overthrown by the Crusaders; in vain do the Seljukians disappear from the an-

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nals of the world; in vain is Constantinople respited; in vain is Europe saved. Christendom in arms had not yet finished, it had but begun the work, in which it needed the grace to persevere. Down came the savage hordes, as at first, upon Sogdiana and Khorasan, so then upon Syria and its neighboring countries. Sometimes they remain wild Turcomans, sometimes they fall into the civilization of the South; but there they are, in Egypt, in the Holy Land, in Armenia, in Anatolia, forming political bodies of long or short duration, breaking up here to form again there, in all cases trampling on Christianity, and beating out its sacred impression from the breasts of tens of thousands.

Nor is this all; scarcely is the race of Seljuk quite extinct, or rather when it is on its very death-bed, after it had languished and shrunk and dwindled and flickered and kept on dying through a tedious two hundred years, when its sole remaining heir was just in one obscure court, from that very court we discern the birth of another empire, as dazzling in its rise, as energetic and impetuous in its deeds as that of Togrul, Alp, and Malek, and far more wide-spreading, far more powerful, far more lasting than the Seljukian. This is the empire of the great (if I must measure it by a human standard) and glorious race of Othman; this is the dynasty of the Ottomans or Osmanlis; once the admiration, the terror of nations, now, even in its downfall, an object of curiosity, interest, anxiety, and even respect; but, whether high or low, in all cases to the Christian the inveterate and hateful enemy of the Cross.

Parallel and contrast: the Seljukian and the Ottoman

There is a certain remarkable parallel and contrast between the fortunes of these two races, the Seljukian and the Ottoman. In the beginning of the twelfth century, the race of Seljuk all but took Constantinople, and overran the West, and did not; in the beginning of the fifteenth, the Ottoman Turks were all but taking the same city, and then were withheld from taking it, and at length did take it, and have it still. In each case a foe came upon them from the north, still more fierce and vigorous than they, and humbled them to the dust.

These two foes, which came upon the Seljukian Turks and the Ottoman Turks respectively, are names by this time familiar to us; they are Genghis and Tamarlane. Genghis came down upon the Seljukians, and Tamarlane came down upon the Ottomans. Tamarlane pressed the Ottomans even more severely than Genghis pressed the Seljukians; yet the Seljukians did not recover the blow of Genghis; but the Ottomans survived the blow of Tamarlane, and rose more formidable after it, and have long outlived the power that inflicted it.

Genghis and Tamarlane were but the blind instruments of divine vengeance. They knew not what they did. The inward impulse of gigantic energy and brutal cupidity urged them forward; ambition, love of destruction, sensual appetite, frenzied them, and made them both more and less than men. They pushed eastward, westward, southward; they confronted promptly and joyfully every peril, every obstacle that lay in their course. They smote down all rival pride and greatness of man; and therefore, by the law (as I may call it) of their nature and destiny, not on politic reason or far-reaching plan, but because they came across him, they smote the Turk.

THESE THEN were one class of his opponents; but there was another adversary, stationed against him, of a different order, one whose power was not material, but mental and spiritual; one whose enmity was not random, or casual, or temporary, but went on steadily from age to age, and lasts down to this day, except so far as the Turk's decrepitude has at length disarmed anxiety and opposition. I have spoken of him already; of course I mean the Vicar of Christ. I mean the zealous, the religious enmity to every anti-Christian power, of him who has outlasted Genghis and Tamarlane, who has outlasted Seljuk, who is now outlasting Othman. He incited Christendom against the Seljukians, and the Seljukians, assailed also by Genghis, sunk beneath the double blow. He tried to rouse Christendom against the Ottomans also, but in vain; and therefore in vain did Tamarlane discharge his overwhelming, crushing force against them. Overwhelmed and crushed they were, but they revived. The Seljukians fell, in consequence of the united zeal of the great Christian commonwealth moving in panoply against them; the Ottomans succeeded by reason of its deplorable divisions, and its decay of faith and heroism.

Pope Urban preaching the First Crusade

— Next issue: The Ottomans and the Christians

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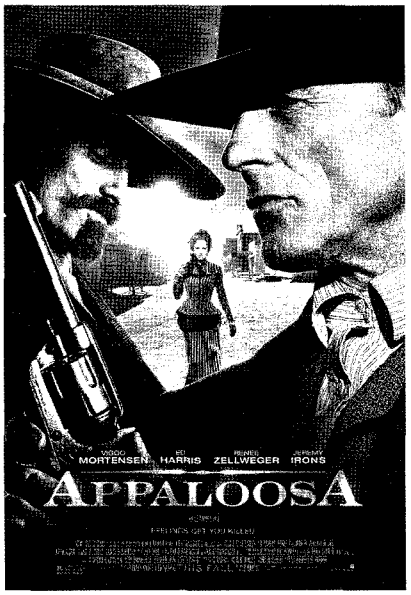
Three movies to look for on DVD

BY ELDON QUICK

Is there a crack in the solid wall of the Hollywood liberal worldview? Glimmers of hope come from three movies coming out in the past few weeks. Since by the time my observations on the movies comes out in print the movies will have long ago disappeared from the big screens, I suppose I am recommending movies to be rented at the DVD store or viewed on HBO more than films one may visit a theater to see. Nevertheless, in my capacity as the one assigned to go to the movies so you don't have to, I recommend the following three movies. As you may have noticed from my previous articles, I am a great fan of Westerns. Life in the Western is so much simpler than life today.



Good and evil are as clear as black and white. One didn't need a wall of law books to determine right from wrong. Bad guys use their strength to bully, cheat, steal, kill, and generally make life difficult for the good guys. Good guys are brave and stand up to the bad µguys and defeat them. The gun is the persuader of last resort, but when it is used it is used with surgical precision and accuracy.

Now comes Ed Harris's movie *Appaloosa* — and it truly is Ed Harris's movie — based on a 2005 novel of the same name by Robert B. Parker, the script is co-written (with Robert Knott) by Ed Harris and the film is produced by Ed Harris, directed by Ed Harris, stars Ed Harris, and comes with a theme song composed and sung by Ed Harris over the closing credits.

Neither Parker's original story nor Harris's film make any claim to originality of plot. They do, however, strive for authenticity, and succeed: in costumes, sets, dialogue, manners, and customs. The story line is as familiar and comfortable as an old shoe. We all know where it is going, but the fun is in seeing how it gets there. The good guys — Virgil Cole (Ed Harris) and his partner, Everett Hitch (Viggo Mortensen) — ride into town from an unknown past (think Alan Ladd, Gary Cooper, Clint Eastwood). They are there to rid the town of the cruel tyranny of the powerful English rancher Randall Bragg (Jeremy Irons) and his men. The girl, Allison French (Renee Zellweger), falls for Virgil. Her life is threatened. He saves her. The bad guy is brought to justice. The good guy rides into the sunset and an unknown future (think *Shane, High Noon,* or *High Plains Drifter).*

The basic plot is a cliché, as are several moments and scenes, but the clichés are done with respect and love. They bring joy to the audience, like seeing an old friend one hasn't seen in years. Of course, this is only the essential story. A lot of twists on it keep the movie interesting and often surprising. For instance, Allison is not not exactly pure as the driven snow, nor does she have a heart of gold. Her heart goes to whatever alpha male appears at the moment on the scene. And Virgil does not ride off into the sunset, his partner does. But Virgil stays to be with Allison, though he is fully aware she will probably not be faithful to him.

The dialogue is sparse, and it is tellingly to the point. Real men don't feel the need to explain themselves. It is also frequently insightful and funny. The gunfights

Eldon Quick, a retired actor living in Hollywood — going to the movies so you don't have to.

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are brief, loud, and deadly. These guys need only one shot to kill a man. In most current Hollywood Westerns, the good guy takes individual, illegal, violent action to solve his problem. But Virgil has never shot a man, and never will, unless he has legal authority to do so. He's not a gunfighter for hire; he's a lawman, there to enforce the law, and bring civilization to the West. Think John Wayne.

Flash of Genius is another movie that escapes the Hollywood cookie cutter. As it began, I was afraid I was in for another "big business is bad" movie: huge, powerful corporate interests taking advantage of the "little guy," cheating him out of his own invention, with violence and death the certain, eventual outcome.

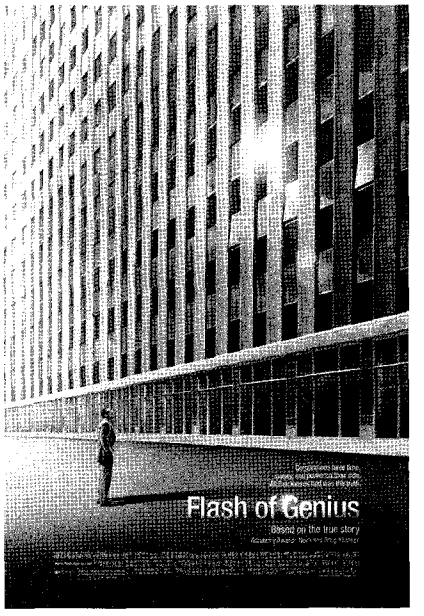
I was right in the first place, but wrong in the second. Based on a true story, inventor Robert Kerns (played by Greg Kinnear) pursues justice with persistence and devotion and, except for one slip, stays within the law. His pursuit of justice costs him his partner, family, and job and puts him briefly into a mental institution. But, because he is fighting not only for himself but for every inventor that giant corporations might take advantage of, he stays the course. Finally, he wins his day in court, only to find that no lawyer will plead his case. The opposition — Ford Motor Company — is too powerful they all say. So Kerns acts as his own lawyer.

It is a true David and Goliath moment. Greg Kinnear as Kerns turns in a terrific performance: all-American, above-average intelligence, little fish in the big pond who nonetheless outwits Harvard-educated team of mega-lawyers who pull every dirty trick known to the law, and they are legion.

An American Carol is jammed-full of satire aimed squarely at the Liberal World View, and repeatedly hits its mark. I can scarcely imagine any young, intellectual graduate of a typically-liberal U.S. college (who came to believe any significant portion of what he was taught) enduring this movie to the end. Too many of the jokes *demand* that such a person show his indignation by getting up and walking out. And, in fact, stories betraying a scandalously *un*-liberal lack of humor circulated widely when the movie first appeared. Dirty tricks were evidently routinely played in an effort to depress *Carol's* reported box office receipts: theaters failing to list the movie on their marquees, customers asking to see *Carol* at multiplex theaters given tickets to *other* movies, posters torn down, and on and on. Liberalism, of course, is a paper tiger when it comes to defending free speech, either AWOL or even to be found joining the enemy when the targeted speech offends the left's prim sense of narrow-minded propriety.

High school students (and perhaps products of less "correct" higher education) may find *An American Carol* right to their taste. I laughed enthusiastically, and I don't know where that leaves me on the education ladder. However, it is satisfying and seems just, if nothing else, to see so many sacred cows of the left gored with the same enthusiasm that liberal Hollywood moviemakers show so generously in trashing conservative ideas and principles.

An American Carol was written, directed, and produced by David Zucker, who is also the creative force behind some of the funniest movie comedies of the past three decades: *Kentucky Fried Movie, Airplane, Police Squad, Naked Gun.* As



its name implies, *American Carol's* plot, such as it is, borrows heavily from Charles Dickens. The story seems to be about a Michael Moore-type documentary filmmaker who wants the July Fourth holiday banned from the calendar. Visited by a series of ghosts of America past, present, and future, he sees the world as it was, is, and will be if liberals had their way. It is not a pretty picture.

MANY EXCELLENT performances make the film sparkle. Leslie Neilsen seems incapable of saying any line without making it funny. Robert Davi is excellent as the intense leader of a band of hapless terrorists seeking a director for their film project. Kelsey Grammer, Dennis Hopper, and Jon Voight also turn in delightful performances.

Although *An American Carol* sort of runs out of gags in the last quarter, the opening scenes make it worth the watching. The DVD version, due early January, should make a nice evening's viewing, especially if you have young teenagers in the house. CPR

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First Things

The power of words

by John Kurzweil

> Newspeak .... [stripped words] of unorthodox meanings .... The word *free* still existed in Newspeak, but could only be used in such statements as "This dog is free from lice" or "This field is free from weeds." It could not be used in its old sense of "politically free" or "intellectually free" since political and intellectual freedom no longer existed even as concepts, and were therefore of necessity nameless ....
>
> — George Orwell, *1984,* Appendix: The Principles of Newspeak

In one of November's more blatant examples of thought control through word control, California Secretary of State Debra Bowen officially titled Proposition 8: "Eliminates right of same-sex couples to marry." But Prop 8 — "Only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California" — merely restates the definition of a word: marriage. It implies, of course, that words, especially words in law, belong to reality, and that is the problem. Prop. 8 is, among other things, a major salient in the war over whether truth, or power, should determine what we say and do as a people. This is the very conflict *Newspeak* was designed to end, once and for all, on the side of power. (Bowen's "summary" includes its own minor-key sub-theme, lining itself up with power (and King George III) by talking of "eliminating" a "right," as though the state, not our Creator, sets the proper limits of government power.)

Now, no conservative, as far as I know, has publicly protested Bowen's entirely typical, entirely liberal, effort to Newspeak both marriage and Prop. 8 into meaninglessness, or, rather, into meaning what neither, in fact, mean at all. Conservatives are *again* leaving the left free to frame the debate through the words used to describe it. This is an endemic problem for conservatives. Consider, for example, how all through the just-concluded campaign, conservative commentators and candidates routinely referred to the "mainstream" media, usually while denouncing that very media for its extreme anti-"mainstream" bias.

The media's Sarah Palin hysteria circus was specifically a repudiation of *mainstream* America, but conservatives couldn't seem to mention it without contradicting their own point by talking about the "mainstream" media. Given their size, they are the major media, but by no means mainstream. (Similarly, our friends in talk radio might quit referring to the "Fairness Doctrine," ceding the "fairness" moral high ground. Call it the censorship doctrine. That's accurate, and places the onus where it belongs.)

Elton John took a stand for honest use of words, saying "Heterosexual people get married. We ... have civil partnerships." And Florida homosexual activist Dean Trantalis criticized the anti-Prop. 8 campaign, saying "Marriage was never our issue. It was thrust upon us by the other side, and they've done a very good job of beating us up over it."

For John and Trantalis, the issue is equality before the law, for which they say the legal designation "civil union" is enough. But that puts them as much in opposition to the left as are conservatives, rule of law being exactly the sort of thing tyranny cannot abide. What John and Trantalis seem not to understand (but may be coming to understand) is that the left's feigned concern for "equality" is merely a means to gull homosexuals (and other constituencies) into joining its army. For the left, the point is not equality, it's power; and the target is not *in*equality, it's the family, a bulwark of real life against the fantasy of pride tyranny requires.

Conservatives must exercise more careful use of words. Our cause is the First Things: good, life, love, truth, and beauty. But we lose the thread when we let the left set the terms of debate, arguing down an endless trail trying to restore understanding of the true issues. So don't use *their* words. It's dishonest, bad tactics, and just plain wrong. CPR

John Kurzweil is CPR's *editor.*

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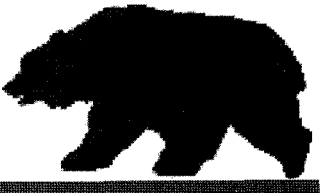

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